

THE ART OF RESISTING COLONIAL EDUCATION

Natalie Currie-Patterson, Master of Arts

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Faculty of Social Sciences, Brock University  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the efforts of discipline and resistance in the Indian Residential School (IRS) system in Canada. The IRS has origins in eighteenth and nineteenth century colonial policies of assimilation. While its goals aimed to transform Aboriginal children into Euro-Canadian adults the system has largely been proven ineffective and highly damaging to First Nation communities. This research discusses the complex connection between colonial curriculum and student resistance within the IRS. The discussion emphasizes students' abilities to creatively subvert disciplinary tactics and the methods of resistance used in the IRS context - with a focus on art and cultural persistence. It highlights a complicated relationship of disciplinary tactics and student resistance within the context of the IRS focusing on the relationship between curriculum and student product.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

(In order of appearance)

IRS – Indian Residential School

TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission

IRSSA – Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement

AHF – Aboriginal Healing Foundation

DIA – Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

OCT – Ontario Certified Teacher

ICC – Indian Claims Commission

ISB – Indian School Bulletin

APS – Aborigines Protection Society

GSA – Anglican Church of Canada General Synod Archives

RG10 – Records relating to Indian Affairs

INAC – Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

BNA – British North America (Acts)

DCI – Department of Citizenship and Immigration

RCAP – Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

MSCC – Missionary Society Church of England in Canada

NHL – National Hockey League

LAC – Library and Archives Canada

CPC – Conservative Party of Canada

CSP - Canada Sessional Papers

NIICHRO – National Indian and Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization

NAN – Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

In June 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a formal statement of apology to former students of Canadian Indian Residential Schools (IRS), declaring the system a “sad chapter in our [Canadian] history” (Harper, 2008). The apology, issued twelve years after the closure of the last IRS, represents the Canadian government’s first formal recognition of the negative impacts of colonial education on Aboriginal individuals and communities throughout Canada.<sup>1</sup> The creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 by the Federal Government aligns with this apology. The TRC, a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) attempts to address the injustices endured by the Aboriginal population in Canada and to help facilitate the healing process.<sup>2</sup> The TRC as well as the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) have both recognized the importance of art in the reconciliation and healing processes (see for example Archibald & Dewar, 2010 as well as the TRC’s Call for Artistic Submissions).<sup>3</sup> In this work I attempt to place IRS students’

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<sup>1</sup> The terms Aboriginal and First Nation are used throughout this thesis in order to refer to status Indians and those of Metis and Inuit decent in Canada. There are significant differences between these groups in terms of political recognition and culture. As such, I will refer to these groups specifically by name when appropriate and possible. At times, the word Indian is also used. With full acknowledgement of the problematic nature of such a homogenizing word I argue that the use of this word is essential, at times, in order to reflect the terms and language used within the social and political climate of the residential school system.

<sup>2</sup> The process of closing the IRS system was both long and complicated. A special joint committee of the House of Commons was established in 1946 in order to complete an extensive review of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA). From this committee came a recommendation that the education of Aboriginal children should no longer be confined to residential schools (Milloy, 1999). The 1948 report of the committee suggested that Aboriginal education should instead be achieved through a system of day schools (Milloy, 1999). However, dismantling the IRS system proved to be a nearly four decade long process. The partnership between church and state regarding Aboriginal education did not end until 1969 (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, .n.d., b). The federal government then had the difficult task of transitioning residential school students to public day-schools throughout the country. This process of integration was complicated by the fact that constitutionally education is a provincial responsibility while Aboriginal education remained the responsibility of the federal government (Milloy, 1999). These complications created a circumstance wherein the last federally operated residential school was not closed until 1996.

<sup>3</sup> The AHF is a Aboriginal run not-for-profit organization based in Ottawa. Created in March of 1998, the AHF as part of *Gathering Strength – Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan* the foundation was given \$350 million dollars and an eleven year mandate by the Federal government. The foundation was charged with the responsibility of encouraging and supporting community-based healing initiatives addressing the legacy of abuse endured by students at residential schools. The foundation received an additional \$125 million in 2007 as a result of the IRSSA. In 2010

creation of art and other cultural products into the context of residential schools broadly and within the student resistance to the assimilative agendas of residential schools.<sup>4</sup>

The IRS system operated as a material representation of the complex relationship between the colonizing British, and later Canadian, government and Aboriginal communities. Tied closely to the overarching colonial goals of cultural destruction through ‘civilization’, resource and land acquisition, and assimilation, the IRS sought to transform the Aboriginal child. Operated by various religious institutions, the IRS system was an integral component of broader government goals in Indian policy developed from the early nineteenth century onwards. The desire to break the traditions and ties of culture between Aboriginal children and their families and communities was central to the development of the IRS system in Canada. Canada’s first Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), and later the first Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, made this clear in the late nineteenth century remarking that, “[t]he great aim of our legislature has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion...” (Montgomery, 1965, p. 13 as quoted in Milloy, 1999, p. 6). Throughout this thesis I consider how the IRS system attempted to transform and ‘civilize’ the Aboriginal child. Furthermore, I consider students’ experiences within the spaces of the IRS with a particular focus on instances of student resistance and cultural persistence. In order to achieve this I address the following research questions:

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the Federal government confirmed that the foundation would not be receiving any additional funding. As such the AHF will be closing in September, 2012 (AHF, n.d., a).

<sup>4</sup> Clarification regarding the use of the term cultural or student product throughout this thesis is necessary here. While I was initially interested primarily in visual art in the form of drawings created in the residential school context I have come to realize that the production of such work is intricately connected with other cultural elements. Thus, it is important to also consider the use of other cultural “products” such as language, rituals, oral histories etc., in order to understand the role of art in the resistance to colonial education.

- 1) How did the curriculum/pedagogy of teachers in the IRS system attempt to reconstruct Aboriginal students?
- 2) What is the relationship between curriculum and student product within the IRS?
- 3) How did students resist the curricular goals of the IRS through the creative manipulation(s) of their circumstances?
- 4) How were these instances of resistance viewed, and dealt with, by school staff?

In addressing these questions I make three main arguments. The first suggests that the material and symbolic spaces of the IRS were central to the broader ‘civilization’ project of the colonial government. The second highlights how these same spaces, despite their orientation towards discipline, simultaneously offered opportunities for student resistance within the IRS setting. Lastly, I argue that some elements of student resistance – cultural persistence broadly and art specifically - were recognized as problematic to the colonial agenda of the IRS by at least some school staff. As such, a repositioning of Aboriginal cultural traditions in the residential school context occurred. This repositioning sought to utilize Aboriginal cultural symbols and traditions in order to achieve the economic assimilation of Aboriginal students.

*i. Rationale*

I take seriously scholarly concerns around conducting research in this ‘postcolonial’ world (see for example Jacobs, 1996; Loomba, 2005 and McEwan, 2009). While designing my research project I pondered its usefulness as well as its possible ethical and political implications. I wondered how my research could make a valuable contribution to discussions about the history and continuing effects of colonialism and colonial education in Canada. Throughout this section I address some of these concerns while providing a rationale for this research.

There is an extensive body of literature pertaining to the Canadian IRS system. In recent years, First Nation communities, scholars and politicians have called for a movement towards accountability, apology and reconciliation. These calls have resulted in the creation of institutions such as the TRC and the AHF. Organizers intend these institutions to help facilitate a wider public awareness and acknowledgement of the residential school system. The TRC, as part of its mandate, has aims to create a public archive, to receive survivor testimony, to promote awareness through education, and to create and submit a report to the Government of Canada (TRC, n.d., b). The AHF describes its role as a facilitator “in the healing process by helping Aboriginal people and their communities help themselves, by providing resources for healing initiatives, by promoting awareness of healing issues and needs, and by nurturing a broad, supportive public environment” (AHF, n.d., c). Such mandates allowed for the creation of literatures and programs from these institutions that are increasingly important to residential school history and contemporary efforts of accountability and healing.

The institutional and scholarly literature on the IRS system explores resistance, assimilation, power relations and exclusion within the spaces of the schools. Although not explicitly, many scholars pay particular attention to the overt instances of resistance carried out within the IRS system (see for example, Haig-Brown, 1991; Furniss, 1995 and Miller, 1996). They also highlight situations of physical and symbolic violence in the form of abuse, neglect and despair that occurred within the IRS schools (see for example, Furniss 1995; Milloy, 1999 and Corrado & Cohen, 2003).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, this scholarship discusses the significant hardships

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<sup>5</sup> The term symbolic violence is used at various points in this thesis. My usage of the term draws upon Bourdieu’s work on the topic. Bourdieu and Waquant (2004, p. 272) define symbolic violence as “violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity.” Expanding on this notion he discusses symbolic violence as forms of domination that occur in everyday social interactions (Bourdieu & Waquant, 2004). The notion of complicity is of particular importance here. For Bourdieu and Waquant (2004, p. 272) complicity is not simply “passive submission.” He suggests that scholars need to consider how symbolic violence requires of the person experiencing it, “an attitude which defies ordinary alternative between freedom and constraint” (Bourdieu, 1982, p. 36). In doing

that Aboriginal individuals and communities have endured long past the dismantling of the IRS system (Corrado & Cohen, 2003). More recently, scholars focus on reconciliation, truth telling, healing and cultural resilience (see for example, Llewellyn, 2008; Mussell, 2008; DeGagne, 2010 and Godlewska, Moore, & Bednasek, 2010). However, despite the breadth of scholarship concerning the IRS system, most scholars focus on discipline and oppression within the schools. Far fewer discuss the complexities of student responses to this oppression (Jansen, 2004). This trend, however, is changing as scholars, such as de Leeuw (2007) and former students such as Johnston (1988) and Fontaine (2010) highlight the complexities of student resistance within the IRS. It is to this body of literature on resistance that my thesis makes a contribution.

I consider simultaneously policy maker's agendas and student's rebuttals to them through efforts at cultural persistence and other subtle, but insistent, instances of resistance in the IRS setting. Such an undertaking is distinctive in that it addresses the relationship between the complex curricular goals of colonial education and indirect forms of student resistance in residential schools. Sarah de Leeuw (2007) has done similar work focused on residential schools in British Columbia. She argues that art had a specific role in both the assimilation project and student resistance to it; that the residential school was a site of struggle over the (re)production of student identities. In order to extend the discussion started by de Leeuw (2007) I thought it important to investigate and understand the opportunities that students encountered or created within the IRS curriculum that allowed them to re-narrate the spaces and curriculum of the residential school. I find particularly interesting exhibitions of resistance that can be understood as subtle or 'off-kilter' resistance (Butz & Ripmeester, 1999). 'Off-kilter' resistance is defined by Butz and Ripmeester (1999, para 5) as resistance "that manage[s] to disrupt or partially

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so it becomes clear that domination and symbolic violence gain their effects "not in the pure logic of knowing consciousness but through the schemes of perception, habitus..." (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 340). In discussing the IRS, then, symbolic violence is important as it is both a scheme of discipline and a potential outcome.

subvert local conditions of domination or oppression.” In like manner, Scott (2008) stresses that such ‘everyday forms of resistance’ are important to any discussion of how repressed peoples engage dominant forces. These notions of resistance have led me to think through the autoethnographic elements of art and other cultural products produced within the residential school and how these elements have been utilized as both curricular goals and a method of resistance. Autoethnography is a complicated concept; for the purposes of this research I have utilized Pratt’s (1992) understanding, which identifies and considers instances where the colonized engage with the colonizers’ terms in order to represent themselves. The investigation of autoethnographic elements of student produced art illuminate a more nuanced narrative of resistance and staff responses in the IRS system. Furthermore, the concept helps us to discover how students were able to find opportunities for resistance in the very material and symbolic spaces that sought to constrain them.

My interest in the IRS system stems from my own positionality. More specifically, my focus in the topic of Aboriginal education broadly and the Canadian IRS system specifically derives from personal experience. First, my observations made while gaining my Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) status provide much of my motivation. Through these instances I became keenly aware of the small portion of contemporary curriculum dedicated to addressing the ongoing effects of colonization and colonial education. My training as a teacher also provides me with a skill set that allows me to understand the relationship among curriculum, pedagogy, power relations and the IRS classroom. Second, I identify as a person of mixed heritage; along with a mix of European ancestors there is rumour of an Aboriginal component that my family has historically denied. As a member of a family that prioritizes our dominant

and colonial heritage, I simultaneously feel a sense of personal conflict and curiosity concerning the long lasting effect of colonial discourses.

The contemporary social and political climate has called upon Canadians to recognize that residential schooling is “a dark and painful heritage that all Canadians must accept as a part of our history” (Dion, 2008, p. 1529). I agree that the wider recognition of the traumatic legacy of the IRS system is integral to the process of healing the damage this system of colonial education created and the damage of colonialism generally.<sup>6</sup> I adhere strongly to the sentiment embedded within the apology made to the survivors of the IRS system by The United Church,

We know that many within our church will still not understand why each of us must bear the scar, the blame for this horrendous period in Canadian history. But the truth is, *we are the bearers of many blessings from our ancestors, and therefore, we must also bear their burdens* (General Council Executive - The United Church of Canada, 1998, para 5, my emphasis).

I see a close connection between this apology, Dion’s declaration and statements made by Aboriginal artist Richard William Hill (2004, pg 52 as cited in de Leeuw, 2007, p. 3), “[t]hese histories are still playing out in our lives...Of course these are white histories as much as they are Aboriginal and should matter to anyone living off the spoils of conquest in the Americas.” This sentiment is further amplified by Milloy’s (1999) argument that the history of the IRS system is not ‘someone else’s’ history but rather is an important part of our colonial heritage and is a history of which all Canadians should be aware. This thesis, then, is an attempt for one such Canadian to engage with this historical circumstance in a comprehensive and meaningful way.

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<sup>6</sup> It is important, here, to make a note regarding the presence of former residential school student’s names throughout this thesis. In some instances, particularly with the pieces of art from the Anne Clarkson Collection (courtesy of The Shingwauk Project), student names are visible. As well, names listed in *Shingwauk Memories* (The Shingwauk Project) are left as recorded. Because these pieces are available in the public domain (through The Shingwauk Project’s website) I have left them as presented on the images. Where I have come across student names in school, administrative, or government records, however, I have edited them out. Furthermore, as the names of former students in previously published testimonials have already been altered I have left them as presented in the original texts.

ii. *Colonialism, Colonial Education and Geography*

While completing this project I have been asked the same question time and time again; “But how is that geography?” I respond to this question in two ways. Firstly, I find myself referring to Stephane Dion’s reply to Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Statement of Apology. Dion (2008, p. 1529), states, “[t]oday we live in a reality created by the residential school system, a present that is haunted by this tragic and painful heritage...” Our contemporary experiences, then, are affected by the past. The legacy of the IRS and colonialism linger in today’s society and continue to affect the ordering and experience of contemporary time and space. It is also important to recognize that all exercises of power and all forms of resistance literally take place. Thus, exercises of power and acts of resistance impact socio-cultural interactions and human geographies not only in the immediate temporal context, but across time as well.

Secondly, this project ‘is geography’ because colonialism, education and people’s reactions to them are inherently spatial. The spatiality of colonialism is, perhaps, more obvious. As an undertaking premised in the acquisition of land and resources colonialism is rooted in space. Noyes (1992) for example claims that spatiality is the one concept that facilitates the understanding of the intersections of representation, personal experience and the social form under conditions of colonization. Colonial discourses, Noyes (1992, p. 136) suggests, play an integral role in the production of “empty space” which “results from the ability of writing to classify and to supplant existing unwritten meaning” and thus legitimates the repurposing of this space to serve the modern economy. Other scholars also highlight the importance of geography to colonial and postcolonial studies. Gregory (2004, p. 17), for example, suggests that colonial discourses are closely linked with imaginative geographies or “constructions that fold distances



into difference through a series of spatializations” which posit “[t]heir’ space” as “the inverse of ‘our’ space.” Caucasian Canadians often understand ‘their’, or Aboriginal, space is understood as improperly used in comparison to ‘our’ economized space. The spatiality of colonialism also extends to policies that attempt to alter the relationship between First Nation communities and the land.

These can be seen in broader colonial policies and laws throughout Canadian history. For example, as the ‘usefulness’ of Aboriginal populations waned in the years after the War of 1812 the government created the reserve system and began to restrict mobility rights for Aboriginal people leaving room for the burgeoning settler society (Miller, 2000). The Darling Report (1828) suggested that model farms be created on reserve land in order to transform the Indian population into sedentary farmers able to participate in the modern economy (Dickason, 2009). The *Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of the Indian Tribes in this Province (1857)* went even further. It sought to break up reserves by bestowing twenty hectares of reserve land to enfranchised Indians. By encouraging European land division and ownership laws, the act purposefully repositioned Aboriginal people and their lands in the purview of the civilization project.

In the years following government policy decisions such as the *Indian Act* of 1876 and the *Electoral Franchise Act* of 1885, contributed to the creation of official “Indian status” while simultaneously creating a number of circumstances that could remove it (Moss, Gardner-O’Toole, and The Law and Government Division, 1987 (Revised 1991)). The spatiality of colonialism in Canada becomes apparent through a historical study of the efforts. For explorers and settlers of the colonial movement, land in North America was *terra nullius*, or no man’s land. This meant that, because the land had never been under the control of a recognized

sovereign it did not belong to anyone (Fitzmaurice, 2007).<sup>7</sup> European powers viewed the lands of North America as unclaimed. As such they understood their presence as integral to the proper use and development of the land (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). These beliefs justified the displacement of Aboriginal communities from their lands as well as their relocation to reserve land. Such spatial components of colonial policy continue to play out in Canada. Contemporarily, this can be seen in ongoing land claims disputes and disagreements about proposed constitutional amendments.<sup>8</sup>

The spatiality of education is equally important to this discussion. Both the hidden and overt goals of curriculum discipline students on how to ‘properly’ interact with both space and time. Educators achieve these goals through the strict choreography of student’s bodies in time and space. The effects of such a choreography has been a consideration of educational theorists. Giroux and McLaren (1992), for example, argue that the ordering of students bodies in space and time serves to legitimate certain subjectivities while marginalizing others. Furthermore, the form of the classroom transmits to students a certain pedagogical philosophy. The open classroom, for

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<sup>7</sup> Fitzmaurice (2007) stresses that no scholar has been able to definitively identify the origins of the term *terra nullius*. Furthermore, that the language was not used in legal documents to justify the dispossession of land from Australian Aborigines (his research focus). He does, however, argue that the term has deep rooted connections to the ‘natural laws’ and philosophy that were the premise for the legitimization of colonial acts by European powers, namely that the land in Australia (and North America) was unused and that their innate ‘superiority’ was reason enough to take these lands from the Indigenous populations.

<sup>8</sup> Disputes over Aboriginal land rights were brought into the legal sphere in the nineteenth century with *St. Catherine’s Milling v. The Queen* (1885). The case originated as a dispute between Ontario and the Federal government over the province’s northwestern boundary. The First Nations population who occupied the land in question were not consulted during the initial proceedings. The final judicial decision delivered by Chancellor Boyd in 1888 held that since arriving in North America the British had gained title over the lands occupied by the First Nations. Boyd contended that previous to the arrival of the British Aboriginal communities had only held a right of occupancy. As such their claim to land was “a personal and usufructuary right, dependent on the good will of the Sovereign” (in Dickason, 2009, p. 318). Boyd’s decision was maintained through three appeals and served as the legal precedent over land claims. An arbitration process regarding land claims was set up in the 1890s it was inadequate and largely ignored the voices of Aboriginal communities. The Canadian government did not establish legislation in regards to land claims until 1960s with the creation of the Indian Claims Commission (ICC). Dr. Lloyd Barber, the Commissioner of the ICC, delivered his final report in 1977. In the report he stated that land claims could only be effectively dealt when First Nations “established their position through research” (Dickason, 2009, p. 328). The decision meant that the onus was now on Aboriginal communities to establish their claims.

example, is intended to promote student comfort, creativity and engagement (Campbell, 2008).<sup>9</sup> Conversely, the traditional classroom form, with a closed door and desks in rows, aids the disciplinary process. Thus, the architecture of residential schools and their classrooms sought to impose particular types of disciplinary techniques and, thus, docility upon students. The positioning of student in classrooms as well as their limited access to other areas of the residential school ensured they were constantly visible to school staff (de Leeuw, 2009). The spaces of education, then, are important in determining how particular discourses around gender, race, ability, sexuality, ethnicity and class are normalized and embodied by students (Hirst and Cooper, 2008).

In a colonial setting policymakers and administrators also sought to use the IRS to transform the way Aboriginal individuals and communities engaged with both space and time. For example, Milloy (1999, p. 37) refers to colonial education's attempts to replace Aboriginal children's ontologies or "the[ir] symbolic ordering of the world" as inherited from their parents understandings and teachings. While the IRS system was largely unsuccessful in replacing students' understanding of the world, the geographic repercussions of the system are vast in both historical and contemporary contexts. For example, after leaving the IRS system some students did not return to their home communities. At times, this led to siblings being geographically 'scattered' throughout North America (Shingwauk Memories, nd). Repercussions can also be seen in the loss of many cultural traditions. Many contemporary Aboriginal communities are now home to former students, and their families and friends, who face battles with continued

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<sup>9</sup> The open classroom became popular in post-war England and later in the 1970's in North America. The open classroom promotes experiential learning by students through an open design concept with no assigned seating and the use of non-traditional educational resources. The open classroom design is premised in the value of student-centered learning where the teacher's role is that of a coach or facilitator. For more information see, Ross, Zimiles and Gerstein (1976) and Berk (2000).

internalized colonization and self-hatred that has negatively impacted familial and community bonds (Rice & Snyder, 2008).

Throughout my thesis I refer to the unique nature of each school, classroom and student's experience. However, during my research I was unable to locate any one school with a good, and accessible, documentary record coupled with a collection of student art. Therefore, in order to set the context for my discussion I draw upon a number of published works concerning the details of a number of schools. Though these examples come from a number of residential schools I utilize this information to evoke the disciplinary nature of the IRS system. I also use this strategy to contextualize student resistance. These examples, though broad in scope, provide a context through which the collection of student art that I did encounter can be discussed.

The value of my research has been significantly enhanced through the generous sharing of Indigenous understandings and cultural knowledge provided by various residential school survivors in the form of published testimonies. Because my research focuses on how students in several residential schools interacted with the assimilative goals of the IRS system and how they re-narrated the spaces of the residential school through instances of resistance, I feel it necessary to acknowledge that I am aware that this is only one part of the multi-faceted story of the Canadian IRS system. I admit to my limited ability to represent life in residential schools. Thus, I do not present this thesis as a comprehensive analysis of the individual experiences of students at in the IRS system. I recognize that it is but a portion - a stepping stone - towards understanding the powerful and resilient students at IRS and their ability to resist the goals of colonial education.

### *iii. Thesis structure*

This thesis is an exploration of the effects of government policies of assimilation, attempts at Christianization, and colonial education and the experiences of First Nations people. I address students' participation in, and reaction to, the goals of colonial education and broader government goals of assimilation as presented through art and other cultural products. The relationship between curriculum, pedagogy and student product is of particular importance throughout this thesis.

I have organized my thesis in the following way. In chapter two I position my research within the discipline of geography. Next, I unfold the theoretical concepts central to this thesis. I begin with a discussion of discourse and discursive sites and highlight the intricate connection between them and institutions. I then move on to discuss my understanding of power, discipline and resistance. In the second half of the chapter I conduct a review of literature. Here, I begin with a discussion on colonialism and postcolonialism. I then move on to literature on children and childhood, the Indian Residential School system, curriculum and pedagogy and finally autoethnography. In sum, I build a heuristic scaffolding for my research. Chapter three outlines my methodological strategies. I first contemplate the difficulties related to completing research on the Canadian IRS system. These difficulties include acknowledging the complicated nature of representation in the post colonial context, the resources available in the archival setting and their socio-political histories, as well as the ethical considerations regarding such a sensitive topic. I then discuss the multiple methods used in the creation of this thesis. Here, I also detail my data collection and analysis.

Chapter four focuses on the historical context that led to the production of the IRS system. I trace these historical circumstances from early contact through to the present day with

reference to relevant government. I then discuss how the IRS system continues to impact the lives of Aboriginals and Canadians in the contemporary context and some measures that have been taken to address this. Chapter five and six discuss discipline and resistance in the context of the residential school respectively. Both are structured in a way that use the concomitant curriculums - the overt, hidden and null – as a referential model. As such, both chapters explore how disciplinary and resistance tactics were used as tools aimed at the colonial goals of the IRS curriculum. Chapter seven deals with resistance as carried out by students through cultural persistence and art. I first examine the place of art in the residential school. Next, I explore cultural persistence as carried out by students both in and beyond the residential school context. Here, I highlight language and art as resistance to colonialism. I then probe staff responses to the cultural persistence movement and highlight the cyclical nature of resistance and response within the residential school.

Chapter eight concludes the thesis. Here, I consider the broad and lingering effects the IRS system has on the contemporary cultural and political landscape as well as the socio-political relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Canada. I end this thesis by thinking through the ongoing consequences of colonial education for contemporary Aboriginal students. As such, I end with comments on possibilities for important future research.

## **Chapter Two: Theoretical Perspective and Literature Review**

The Indian Residential Schools were just one site of an expansive effort of colonialism. Staff and students struggled daily over the composition of both the character and the identities of students at these sites. In this chapter, I sketch out the theoretical perspectives and relevant literatures that structure this thesis. First, I outline my theoretical perspective detailing my understanding of some terms key to the study of residential schools: discourse, power, discipline, and resistance. Then I discuss the relevant literature to this research. Due to the abundance of literature relevant or pertaining to the IRS system it is necessary to focus on a series of particularly influential topics and works. As a result I have organized the literature review in a series of themes.

### *i. Theoretical Perspective*

My research can be located in the sub-discipline of historical geography. Michael Heffernan (2009, p. 332) defines historical geography as “[a] sub-discipline of human geography concerned with the geographies of the past and with the influence of the past in shaping the geographies of the present and the future.” Many historical geographers, Heffernan (2009) argues, have undertaken research on how colonial legacies have continued to affect contemporary geographies of identity, language and other aspects of culture. My research contributes to this body of work. I also place my own research in the realm of post-structuralist thought. Post-structuralist geographies are epistemologically centered in that “productive moment[s]” occur exploring the processes through which “social relations of power fix the meaning and significance of social practices, objects, and events, determining some to be self-evident, given, natural and enduring” (Woodward, Dixon, Jones III, 2009, p. 396). I see great

benefit in the interrogation of frequently taken-for-granted concepts such as objectivity and truth. This is particularly important for scholars researching Aboriginal historical experiences in the Canadian context.

Both my sub-disciplinary placement and theoretical understandings encourage the consideration of not just the content of historical records but also the context in which they were created. This is an important consideration when utilizing both government documents and scholarly literature. Until the 1970's much of the scholarly literature dealing with Aboriginal peoples positioned them as passive recipients of change or reactionary figures in history since European contact (Jansen, 2004). Government, missionary and anthropological documents, no doubt, contributed to this understanding. For example, French explorer Pierre-Esprit Radisson describes an encounter with a group of Aboriginals,

We weare Ceasers, being nobody to contradict us. We went away free from any burden, whilst those poore miserable [Amerindians] thought themselves happy to carry our Equipage, for the hope that they had that we should give them a brasse ring, or an awle, or a needle... Wee weare lodged in ye cabban of the chieftest captayne. We like not the company of that blind, therefore left him. He wondered at this, but durst not speake, because we were demi-gods (Pierre-Esprit Radisson, 1885, p. 198, 200-1 as cited in MacLeod, 1992).

Such statements speak more to the imperial fuelled megalomania of early explorers and the social, political and economical context of the time than the actual lived experiences of Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal descriptions of such encounters have, in recent years, become increasingly considered and offer a very different perspective. For example, throughout William W. Warren's (2009) *History of the Ojibway People* Europeans are discussed but they are peripheral characters not 'demi-gods.'<sup>10</sup> Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars now work towards addressing the gaps and conflicts in historical records of colonialism caused by the

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<sup>10</sup> One of the earliest known comprehensive accounts of Ojibway history by an Aboriginal author, William W. Warren's *History of the Ojibway People* was written in the 1850s and first published in 1885.



absence of Aboriginal perspectives and voices (see for example; Axtell, 1992; Brown & Vibert, 2003). Crucial to such efforts is the continued recognition of oral histories, as well as, the acknowledgement and ‘tracking’ of Aboriginal voices through sources written by colonial record keepers (Brown, 2003). As such, it is critically important to base my readings of documents created by or for a European audience in a critical framework.

A fundamental theoretical tenant of this work is the importance of discourse and discursive sites. Discourse, according to Mills (2003), is one of the most frequently used terms from Foucault’s work, but also one of the most complicated. The complications arise from the multiple ways Foucault utilizes the term. For example, in *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1972, p. 80) Foucault refers to discourse as “the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements.” In other instances he uses the term to refer to a statement or set of statements that are combined with others in ways that enable and indeed promote the distribution of specific utterances while hindering the circulation of certain statements (Mills, 2003). Mills (2003) has observed that throughout his work Foucault makes connections between discourse and power relations and has suggested that this is the reason for the widespread application of the term in academia. For the purposes of this research, I understand discourse as an articulation or set of articulations that are attached to the social contexts that give them meaning (Woodward, et al., 2009).

A discourse, then, represents a particular representation of the world. A hegemonic discourse occurs when the articulation becomes normalized and is privileged over other discourses. The presence of hegemonic discourses plays an important role in creating and maintaining norms around thoughts and actions that are deemed appropriate (Woodward, et al.,

2009). It is important, however, to remember that, for Foucault, discourse is more than just the written or spoken word (Cresswell, 2009). Rather, discourse plays an important role in “establishing new networks of meaning and practice which delineate, produce, and reinforce relations between what it is possible to think, say, and do” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 211). Space and social power, for Foucault, are co-constitutive and mutually reliant; social relations are created in and unfurl “through spatial distributions, built environments, and spatial significations” as much as “space itself is socially produced” (Woodward, et al., 2009, p. 404). Thus, the production and use of discursive sites is integral to the production and reception of discourses in society. Discourses are tied closely with the institutions that simultaneously reinforce their meanings and lend authority to their presence.

It is also important to make clear my understanding of power and discipline as well my position on how the two are connected. Defining power is difficult. Like Heller (1996) I claim that in order to work towards a definition of power one must first acknowledge that it is not a possession. Rather, power exists as “a thoroughly entangled bundle of exchanges, dispersed ‘everywhere’ through society” (Sharp, Routledge, Philo, & Paddison, 2000, p. 20). This argument seems to echo Foucault’s (1980, p. 98) own sentiment that “[p]ower is employed and exercised through a net-like organization.” Power, understood this way can never be concentrated solely in the hands of one individual or group. However, the assertion that power is everywhere does not imply that the ability to exercise power is equally accessible by all. While no individual or group is ever able to control all elements of a social formation’s power-diagram there are instances when certain individuals have access to more mechanisms of power than others (Heller, 1996). Thus, power flows throughout the complex network of a society’s “power-diagram” and can never be *completely* monopolized by one group or individual.

Knowledge that individuals can be embedded in several power relations simultaneously further supports this argument. As such, individuals are often both the *subjects* and *objects* of power and thus are often at once exercising and being manipulated by power (Heller, 1996).

Power has been linked with repression in much scholarly work. For Foucault, however, power did more than serve as a tool of repression it “traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse” as such it should “be considered as a productive network that runs through the social body” (Foucault, 1980, p. 118-9). Power, in this understanding, is neither innately negative nor positive (Corbridge, 2009). Rather, power acts as a neutral medium for enacting social change (Heller, 1996).

Despite understanding power as a medium without innate alignment to a social force, I acknowledge that the exercise of power, by those in a position of structural advantage in the power-diagram, is often connected with efforts of discipline. I base my understanding of discipline and the exercise of disciplinary power in my reading of Foucault’s (1995) seminal text *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.<sup>11</sup> Discipline, Foucault (1995, p. 128-9) argues, developed in the late eighteenth century as a corrective technique in order to restore “the obedient subject, the individual subjected to habits, rules, orders and authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must allow to function automatically in him.” Thus, power is used to achieve discipline that aims to create from the “unorganized, untrained and potentially disruptive – at best, useless – population” a group that adheres to the norms and habits imposed upon them through societal discourses including “enhance[d] productive capacity, and...political docility” (Ransom, 1997, p.40). Discursive sites play an

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<sup>11</sup> *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* was originally published in 1975 and was first translated into English in 1977.

important role in the privileging of particular discourses in society, both as a site of authority and as a location where discourses become imprinted on and in the body through discipline.

In the context of colonialism, the residential school represents a discursive space at which Foucault (1995) might claim an organized strategy of bodily coercions, through a manipulation of its comportment, behaviours and elements, occurs.<sup>12</sup> Such coercions represent an attempt to create docile bodies through an intimate control of the body and its actions (Foucault, 1995). As Ransom (1997, p. 33) argues such disciplinary techniques seek to control the body first; “[g]et a firm grip on the body and its forces, bend it to your will and the mind will follow.” The success of such discipline is dependent on the following: surveillance, normalizing judgment, examination and classification (Foucault, 1995). Foucault (1995) bases his discussion on surveillance on Bentham’s panopticon. The panopticon is an architectural style of prison that enables the permanent surveillance of inmates from a single tower. Thus, it “induces in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1995, p. 201). Foucault (1995) describes normalizing judgement as the process of creating norms. These norms are based upon particular discursive alignments. Examination compares the individual and compiles the necessary information to ‘create standards’ against which the individual is judged. Classification, the last component of totalizing discipline, creates the ‘other’ as an individual who deviates from the privileged norms and

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<sup>12</sup> A note is required here regarding my understanding of space, place and site. While there is no firm definition of space, I understand the term to emphasize the interrelated nature of social and spatial phenomena (Elden, 2009). While place, according to Cresswell (2009), combines location (an absolute point), locale (the material setting for social relations), and sense of place (the emotions evoked by the place). The term space, then, is used when considering the more abstract nature and organization of the material world while place is related to the practice of everyday life (Elden, 2009). For the purposes of this thesis I use the term space when discussing how the material composition of locations were used in attempts to achieve or manipulate a particular social relations – as exhibitions of both discipline and resistance. The term place is used when discussing how, at an intimate level the colonial project elicited particular feelings about various locations. Similarly, I conceptualize and use the term site to describe the smaller scale places of the colonial project as experienced by IRS students.

standards (Foucault, 1995). Each of these techniques is essential to the functioning of totalizing discipline.

Throughout *Discipline and Punish* Foucault (1995) argues that disciplinary power is exercised over everyone in modern society; discipline is inescapable (Simons, 1995). This notion, according to Simons (1995, p. 6) simultaneously offers us “an ethic of permanent resistance.” The notion that as each new system of domination or form of governance develops so to do the ‘new subjectivities’ that provide its antagonism. Such antagonisms are frequently referred to as resistance. A complicated term, resistance can be broadly understood as “struggles carried out by social actors to oppose, challenge, or undermine dominant workings of power or the normative production of space” (Cupples, 2009, p. 370). Because much of the literature on power has associated it with repression, resistance has often been conceptualized as the antagonistic behaviour of those without power. However, it is important to acknowledge that the social actors engaged in struggles are not without power. Rather, they are utilizing the ‘less-power’ they hold to resist the asymmetrical power relations in which they are embedded (Heller, 1996; Jansen, 2004). Heller’s (1996, p.99) argument that power and resistance are “no more than two different names Foucault gave to the same capacity, the capacity to implement change” further strengthens this argument.

My conceptualization of resistance is based in the argument that this capacity to implement change can take form in a multitude of ways and is a flexible concept. I agree with Butz and Ripmeester’s (1999) argument that scholars must take note of both direct and indirect forms of confrontation or resistance. Essential to this understanding is the argument that “even ordinary people who are marginalized by existing forms of domination have some power at their disposal to remake the landscapes in which they live” (de Certeau, 1984 and Scott, 1985 as

paraphrased in Cupples, 2009, p. 371). de Certeau (1984, 2003 a,b) examines the ways individuals and groups creatively manage to disrupt institutional power. From this work comes a theme of creativity in the ways oppressed individuals and groups are able to create “innumerable ways of playing and foiling the other’s game” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 18). Of particular relevance to this research, and my understanding of resistance broadly, is the notion of ‘La perruque’ or instances where workers disguise their own work as work done for their employers. Such a conceptualization pushes scholars to consider resistance that is not initially obvious and to recognize theorizations of resistance that acknowledges its fluidity and creativity.

I also draw from Scott’s (1990) notion of public and hidden transcripts. The public transcript, what occurs ‘face-to-face,’ rarely provides insight into the feelings of the dominant or subordinate group (Scott, 1990). Conversely the hidden transcript describes actions that occur beyond the direct observation of those in power (Scott, 1990). The hidden transcript, then, may offer a more truthful view of the feelings and actions of the subordinate group as it occurs ‘off-stage’ (Scott, 1990). Scott’s (1985) anthropological observations have highlighted how colonized peoples have mobilized the ‘ordinary weapons’ available to them to subvert domination – such as false compliance, ‘foot dragging’ and sabotage. Such actions, Scott (1985, 1990) argues, are more effective than direct physical or political altercations as they are less likely to be detected by those in a position of authority and thus may be more persistently subversive. Such behaviours, then, allow for resistance, even if limited, and offer hope that other forms of subversion might be possible in the future. Scott’s notion of the hidden transcript coupled with de Certeau’s ‘La perruque’ allow, and indeed promote, the consideration that recorded compliance by students is only part of the residential school story. Through these

theoretical engagements I am able to understand art as a medium through which students could engage in resistance.

I argue that there is not one singular or correct understanding of how discipline or resistance operated within the IRS system. Considering resistance in any context is a complicated endeavour and the IRS is no exception. I recognize that every residential school was unique as were the experiences of the several generations of students that attended them. As such the knowledge of disciplinary tactics and instances of resistance in one school location is not easily transferable to understandings of other schools or the IRS system broadly. Because of this I acknowledge the limitations of this research. I do not present this thesis as a complete statement on student resistance across the IRS system. Rather, I present this work as a small, but hopefully, important part of residential school history.

## *ii. Literature Review*

At this point I move into my appraisal of literature relevant to this research. The section begins with a discussion pertaining to colonialism and postcolonial literature. Secondly, I consider the label of ‘child’ and the notion of ‘childhood.’ Next, I discuss the literature on the IRS system in Canada. This section addresses both government literature, testimonials from former students as well as academic writing on the topic. From here I move on to a discussion on curriculum and pedagogy. My focus here is curriculum development and pedagogical practice in the residential schools. I conclude the chapter with a contemplation of the literature on autoethnography and its relation to resistance in the residential school.

*a. Colonialism*

The history of colonialism is complex; the act of colonizing ‘new lands’ has taken many forms throughout human history. From the earliest written accounts to the Roman Empire in the second century A.D. to the height of European expansion in the sixteenth century and onwards colonizers have sought to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their lands (Loomba, 2005). Of particular relevance here are the instances of European colonialism that occurred in the eighteenth century and beyond. My temporal focus exists because the IRS system was developed and maintained as a result of acts of colonization that occurred during this time. Furthermore, the proselytizing fervor present during these acts of colonization had direct links with the IRS system. Scholars tie the colonial undertakings of this period – at least in part - to the social, cultural, political and economical changes brought on by the industrial revolution in Britain. As Comaroff and Comaroff (1991, p. 62) argue the industrial revolution brought about a “reconstructed self” centered on the importance of individual discipline, civilized society and an early notion of classical liberalism. Literacy, during this time, became emblematic of the value of self-improvement, and conversely, illiteracy became associated with an uncivilized individual or community (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). The missionary, during this period, takes on the role of agent of ‘social change’ who seeks to transmit these ideals throughout the ‘new world’ (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). The notion of progress is central to the justification of colonization efforts as well. Berkhofer (1979) suggests that the modern notion of progress in human history developed during the Enlightenment and is reliant on the comparison of societies. Such comparisons, Berkhofer (1979, p. 47) argues, envisioned savagery in the ‘new world’ as similar to “past savagery in the history of mankind” and promoted “students of history to fill in the gaps of evidence of the historical record.” These imagined histories were distributed as



hegemonic discourse and used to rationalize the colonization efforts of the Europeans and provided the basis for understanding the Indian as in need of salvation (Berkhofer, 1979; Francis, D., 2011).

I move now to a discussion of Edward Said's (1979) *Orientalism*. A significant contribution to the theorization of colonial encounters, *Orientalism* discusses the imagined binary between East and West and the real consequences that have emerged from it. Said's discussion, though geographically focused on the Orient and Occident, has much to contribute to the discussion of the colonization of North America. Said (1979) argues that the academic study of the Orient actively creates discourses about the Orient that seek to naturalize the creation of the 'other' (Butz, 1995). Furthermore, Said (1979) argues that Orientalism, or representations of the 'other', are created and maintained to serve the purposes and/or tendencies of a particular political, social and economic group. Thus, Orientalism is more than just the study of the Orient, but also "a style of thought based on ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'," as well as developing, "a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient" (Said, 1979, pp. 2-3). This corporate institution, Said (1979) argues, deals with the Orient by creating and authorizing views of it, as well as, teaching these views which leads to the 'justified' settling and ruling of it. Thus, the discourse of Orientalism can be understood and analyzed as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1979, p. 3). Said's discussion, then, presents us with a theoretical tool through which we can understand how academic knowledge is filtered through cultural bias (Loomba, 2005). Furthermore, the concept of Orientalism helps us to understand how academic discourses can promote the difference between 'us and them' often creating the 'other' as inferior (Said, 1979). The conclusions drawn in Said's discussion of Orientalism are not geographically bound to the

Orient. The same beliefs and processes that distinguished between the Orient and the Occident were used to differentiate between the settler and the native in the colonial setting. Thus, Said's (1979) exploration of how the 'other' becomes naturalized in both academic and political contexts is also applicable to the study of the colonization of North America.

Thus far I have discussed how much of my theoretical understandings of power, discipline, and resistance come from the work of Foucault and much of my theorizations about colonialism from Said. The two, however, share a complicated academic relationship. Originally a proponent of Foucault's work, Said used Foucault's discussions on discourse, discursive formations, power and knowledge extensively in his own discussions of colonialism (Racevskis, 2005). Rarely, however, did Foucault actually discuss colonialism, some have even called his silence on the topic 'astounding' (Legg, 2007). Said criticized Foucault for his Eurocentrism – which, he claims, ignored the ways disciplinary techniques and power was used to manage and restructure much of the colonized world (Legg, 2007). For Said, it was Foucault's 'political quietism' that was particularly problematic as it led ignoring the methods used to gain and maintain power (Legg, 2007). Foucault did, however, acknowledge that "the techniques and weapons Europe transported to its colonies had a 'boomerang' effect on the institutions, apparatuses and techniques in the West" (Foucault, 1975-6 as paraphrased in Legg, 2007, p. 266). While their academic relationship is complex I find that both Foucault and Said have important contributions to make to my own discussion of colonialism and residential schooling Canada.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> A comment is also necessary here regarding Foucault and geography. Foucault's work has been used broadly throughout the discipline of geography. Many geographers have found Foucault's theorizations on discourse, power, knowledge, and strategies of discipline appealing and useful to studies of modern governmentality, gender, sexuality and colonial encounters – to name a few (Elden & Crampton, 2007). In all his encounters with spatiality, however, Foucault rarely mentioned the discipline of geography. It was not until he took part in an interview with

The behaviours that Said (1979) ascribes to Occidental academics in his discussions of Orientalism are strikingly similar to actions of those who undertook to colonize North America. Through their descriptions of both the landscape and the people of North America European colonists sought to exercise complete control in their new environment. This required that the explanations of the ‘others’ or First Nations people of North America be widespread and normalized. Thus, the practicing of creating the ‘other’ that Said (1979) describes is linked with the establishment and distribution of a body of knowledge that is promoted as truth. The creation of Aboriginals as ‘others’ and the discourses that accompanied this label had very real implications in the colonial effort. Discourses underlay missionaries’ efforts to convert the population in order to ‘raise’ Aboriginal peoples to the spiritual level of their European counterparts. Furthermore, these discourses supported a policy of state sanctioned, and financed, coercion and forceful social and economic assimilation.

*b. Imagining ‘Indians’: Colonialism, Discourse and the Aboriginal Population in Canada*<sup>14</sup>

By tracing the historical encounters between European explorers and Aboriginal populations through to the missionary efforts of the seventeenth century Jesuits, Dickason (1997) has explored how myths circulated through Europe about the ‘New World’ influenced the interactions between early explorers and indigenous populations. According to Dickason (1997), the use of the term savage to describe the indigenous populations of North America was a result

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the radical geographers for the French journal *Hérodote* in 1976 that he that stated “[n]ow I can see that the problems you put to me about geography are crucial ones for me. Geography acted as the support, the conditions of possibility for the passage between a series of factors I tried to relate...” (Foucault, 2007, p. 182). I agree with Elden and Crampton (2007), however, that while this statement emphasizes the importance of space and place in Foucault’s work it does not presume that geography is the only lens through which Foucault’s work can be considered. Rather, for Foucault, spatiality is “a tool of analysis, rather than merely an object of it” (Elden & Crampton, 2007, p. 9). In the context of this thesis, then, Foucault’s theorizations are utilized in concert with conceptualizations of space in discussions that unfold how the goals of colonial education compared with actual outcomes.

<sup>14</sup> This title is based upon Daniel Francis’ (2011) text *The Imaginary Indians: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*.

of the lens of Christian ideology and political structure common at the time. The term savage described individuals or communities who lived a nomadic subsistence lifestyle, who were often naked, and who lacked (according to European judgment) political organization and a system of writing (Dickason, 1997). Dickason's (1997) work highlights how the discourse of Aboriginal as savage is one of the earliest, and most destructive, images presented by European explorers and settlers.

Both Berkhofer (1979) and Daniel Francis (2011) remind us that the very term Indian is a European invention. The many disparate communities residing in North America upon its 'discovery' were called Indians by Columbus because he thought he had landed in the East Indies (Berkhofer, 1979; Francis, D., 2011). Berkhofer's (1979, p. 26) discussion highlights how the imagery of Indians produced by white society "describe[s] Indian life in terms of its lack of White ways rather than being described positively from within the framework of the specific culture under consideration." Such a description allowed Europeans to understand the Indian population as the antithesis of white society. This led to the discourse of the deficient Indian (Berkhofer, 1979). Depending on perspective the deficient Indian is discussed as either 'good' or 'bad'. Imagery of the 'good' Indian describes "a friendly, courteous, and hospitable" population who nobly lived a life of "liberty, simplicity and innocence" (Berkhofer, 1979, p. 28). Conversely, the 'bad' Indian is guided by superstition, lust, and violence (Berkhofer, 1979). This dual imagery is a problematic simplification of thousands of disparate political, social, religious and cultural communities. Even after the sustained interaction between European settlers and Indian populations, the discourse of the deficient, 'good' and 'bad' Indian is pervasive (Berkhofer, 1979).

Certain discourses about Aboriginal communities in North America became privileged and naturalized during the process of colonization. Daniel Francis (2011, p. 23-4) argues that, “[f]rom the first encounter, Europeans viewed Aboriginal Americans through a screen of their own prejudices and preconceptions. Given the wide gulf separating the cultures, Europeans have tended to imagine the Indian rather than know the Native people...” This ‘Imaginary Indian’, Daniel Francis (2011) contends, contributed to the creation and sustaining of a variety of discourses regarding the Aboriginal population, some positive and some derogatory. Whether negative or positive, however, such discourses can be viewed as the materialization of Said’s (1979) discussions on authorizing views of the other through discourse. Daniel Francis (2011), stresses that the creation of the ‘Indian’ is a self-referential process for the Euro-Canadian population. The Indian of colonial imagination sat opposite the settler population and provided rationale for attempts to ‘raise’ up the Aboriginal to a ‘civilized’ state.

According to Basil Johnston (1988), the discourses surrounding the Aboriginal population, were an integral part of the residential school system. Indeed, the notion of civilizing was focused on First Nations children. Students were taught that their communities were places of poverty and ignorance and that their families were lacking in the important areas of personal hygiene and literacy (Johnston, 1988). The teaching of such discourses to Aboriginal children was also a method of legitimizing the colonization of their land and the eradication of their language and culture. The IRS system, however, is only one aspect of the colonization project in Canada. This literature on the colonization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada also discusses how discourses dealing with the ‘inabilities’ of Aboriginal individuals and communities to care for themselves. This ultimately led to policies that increased restrictions on their spatial movements and on their ability to perform traditional spiritual and cultural ceremonies.

However, the normalization of such discourses did not create a static understanding of each other amongst the colonizer and the colonized (Pratt, 1992; Loomba, 2005). Rather, it must be acknowledged that both the metropolis and the colony were significantly affected by the colonial process. For Pratt (1992), this argument is conceptualized as a cultural ‘contact zone’ or the symbolic and material spaces where the colonizer and colonized meet and interact. The interactions that occur in such contact zones have been the subject of much scholarly discussion. Bhaba’s (1985, 1994) work has provided some of the most influential and controversial contributions to this debate. Bhaba (1994) provides an important critique to Said’s (1979) assumption that colonial discourse is a unilateral creation by colonizing forces. Rather, Bhaba (1994) contends that all colonial discourse is relational, the colonizer and the colonized do not exist independent of one another. In this understanding, total mimesis becomes impossible as “the process of replication is never complete or perfect...something has changed in the context in which it is being reproduced” (Loomba, 2005, p. 89). Mimicry, then, can be used as tool of resistance to the colonial project because it highlights the inability of colonial powers to reproduce themselves (Bhaba, 1985). What results, for Bhaba (1994) is a hybridized version of two previously disparate cultures. This hybrid highlights the unstable, “agonized” and “constant[ly in] flux” characteristics of colonial identity (Loomba, 2005, p. 178).

Bhaba’s work has been criticized for presenting the notion of hybridity as universal characteristic of the ‘colonial condition’ (Loomba, 2005). For Parry (1994) the notion of hybridity risks simplifying the complex interactions between the colonizer and colonized. Furthermore, it is in danger of downplaying the tensions present in that relationship (Parry, 1994). For Shohat (1993 in Loomba, 2005) it is imperative that consideration be paid to the modality of hybridization, forced assimilation may yield a different result than social

conformism or creative transcendence. Also important to the discussion of hybridity in the colonial encounter is alterity, or the construction of difference. For Loomba (2005) the very premise of hybridity is intimately connected to the articulation of cultures as previously ‘pure.’ Thus, the presentation of the colonized’s culture in opposition to that of the colonizer was often utilized in the production of anti-colonial narratives (Loomba, 2005).

The literature on postcolonialism is also important to the discussion of colonialism as we currently reside in a ‘postcolonial’ world. Postcolonialism as a term, area of study as well as historical circumstance is a highly contested concept. As McEwan (2009) argues, postcolonial studies extend beyond the analysis of an epoch after colonialism. Rather, inherent in postcolonial scholarship is an effort to understand and deconstruct the contemporary world at various geographical planes, from the local to the global, in relation to the discourses and structures of the colonial era. Loomba (2005) advocates for the use of postcolonial studies as an avenue to interrogate resistance to efforts of colonial domination as well as the legacies of colonial rule. This literature suggests, therefore, that studying the IRS system in isolation or positioning it as an ‘archeological relic’ is of little value as its impacts are still playing out in contemporary society. Similarly, Jacobs (1996, p. 4) contends that it is important to understand the ways in which local “cultural politics of place and identity in First World cities is enmeshed in the legacies of imperialist ideologies and practices.” Thus, while the literature on postcolonialism seeks to contest the binary created by the false distinction between the historical periods of colonization and decolonization it also becomes appropriate to consider what can be called the colonial present. The colonial present is intimately linked with past imperial practices “of disconnection, dependency and dispossession” which “effectively confined Indigenous identities to state-sanctioned legal and political definitional approaches” (Alfred & Corntassel,

2004, p. 600). The pervasive nature of past imperial practices continues to play out in contemporary colonial agendas that continue to seek separation between Aboriginal peoples and their communities as well as towards a politicized version of the Aboriginal as defined under the Indian Act. The ‘civilization project’ was particularly concerned with Aboriginal children. As such the following section looks at the scholarly literature on children and the notion of ‘childhood.’

*c. The ‘Child’ and ‘Childhood’*

The IRS system sought to transform the Aboriginal child into a European adult. In order to understand these efforts it is important to consider the concept of the ‘child’ and ‘childhood.’ Increasingly in the social sciences the notion of “child” is being reconsidered, particularly as understood in the context of the school. Previously viewed as an unproblematic term describing a state of being occurring before adulthood the ‘child’ and its associative ‘childhood,’ are now widely recognized as a social construction with historical and spatial roots by scholars (Cunningham, 1995; Jenks, 1996; Zornado, 2001 and Heywood, 2001) Historically, the child has been understood in a multitude of ways; as without a soul, as without reason, as miniature adults, as evil and as ‘*tabula rasa*’ or blank slates (Locke, 1690; Rousseau, 1964; de Mause, 1976; Aries, 1973). While all of these conceptions of the child differ, they all posit children as “human becomings rather than human beings” (Holloway & Valentine, 2000, p. 5). Positioning the child in such a manner has, according to Jenks (1996, p. 3), created a situation where “[t]he child, therefore, cannot be imagined except in relation to a conception of the adult...” Furthermore, Jenks (1996, p. 3, my emphasis) argues, the child is assigned the “serious purpose” of being transformed “into an adult, *like ourselves*.” The child then also becomes integral to the



process of cultural reproduction as their transformation to adult sees them assimilated into the norms and customs of Euro-Canadian society.

The IRS's goal was to turn children into successful adults. However, it is important to note that administrators saw Aboriginal children as markedly different from their Euro-Canadian, or white, counterparts (de Leeuw, 2007). They understood Euro-Canadian children as in need of training at school and the nurturing of family in order to become a Euro-Canadian adult. The Aboriginal child was understood as requiring significantly more training. The formation of the IRS was predicated on the belief that "the [Indian] race is in its childhood... There is in the adult [Indian] the helplessness of a child..." (Davin, 1879, np, as cited in de Leeuw, 2007, p. 148). Such a positioning of the Aboriginal population as childlike has connections with Enlightenment philosophies which placed "unknowing children" alongside "savages, illiterates, and idiots" who have a soul which "perceives and understands not" (Locke, 1975, 1.2.5, as cited in Krupp, 2009, p. 57). de Leeuw (2007) has noted how the discourse of Aboriginals as children simultaneously positioned Aboriginal peoples of all ages in the state of 'becoming' versus 'human beings' and legitimized the goals of Indian Affairs to transform the population through the 'civilization project.' Thus, all Aboriginal peoples were constructed, and treated, as children who needed to be 'raised.' In the colonial project the concept of 'raising' the Aboriginal took on two meanings. First, it referred to elevating the Aboriginal population to the self-defined standards of Europeans through the 'civilization' project. Secondly, it refers to the responsibilities bestowed upon missionaries, teachers and administrators of the IRS to nurture and educate Aboriginal children in place of their biological parents.

Childhood is a highly spatialized experience. Increasingly geographers are contributing to the understanding of the child by arguing the influential nature of space in their lives (see for

example; Sibley, 1995; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; O'neil, 2002 and Catling, 2005).

Geographers make important observations into the central role school, home, playground and neighbourhood play in the 'becoming' process of the child. By investigating the spaces of childhood, geographers bring attention to how these spaces represent the social attitudes and understandings of the children who utilize them (Holloway & Valentine, 2000; de Leeuw, 2007). Children's geographies also provide important insight into how children use their agency in these spaces (Valentine, 1997; Holloway & Valentine, 2000 and Katz, 2004). This literature has highlighted that children are not just effected by their surroundings but that they also impact and influence those surroundings (Katz, 2004). Despite this recognition, however, the current body of literature regarding children's geographies rarely theorizes about the child that is "doubly othered, both as child and racialized child" (de Leeuw, 2007, p. 132). As such de Leeuw (2007) argues that there is a gap in the literature regarding Aboriginal children and childhood particularly in the historical context. This project, however, is expressly concerned with the 'doubly othered' Aboriginal child and their experience in the residential school. As such the following section addresses the literature relevant to the development and student experience of colonial education.

#### *d. Indian Residential Schools*

There is an extensive and expanding body of literature on the residential school system in Canada. It contains government reports, published survivor testimonies, newspaper articles, as well as scholarly articles and manuscripts. For the purposes of this chapter I have divided this body of literature into two sections. First, I consider government documents and commissioned reports and the role they played in legitimizing the residential school system. I begin with a discussion of four reports pertaining to the status of the Aboriginal population in British North

America; the Darling Report (1838), the Macaulay Report (1839), the *Report on the Indians of Upper Canada* by the Aborigines Protection Society (1839) and the Bagot Report (1844). I then discuss two reports given to the government that were explicitly concerned with Aboriginal children's education, Ryerson's (1847) *Report on Industrial Schools* and Davin's (1879) *Report on Industrial Schools for Indian and Halfbreeds*. From here I move to discuss the scholarly literature and its descriptive and critical stance on the IRS system. I end the section with a contemplation of the testimonial literature of former students of the residential school system.

#### *i. Government Documents*

Throughout the nineteenth century the Canadian government focused Indian policy towards assimilation and acculturation. During this period the government commissioned and received several reports pertaining to the state of the Indian population. The first of these is *Report on Indian Conditions* delivered by H.C. Darling in 1828. In his report Darling (1828) outlined a formal policy that would see the Aboriginal population living in fixed locations. Darling (1828) contended that at these fixed locations, reserves, the Aboriginal population could be educated on the proper techniques of farming in order to promote their economic independence. Many scholars believe the Darling Report laid the foundation for the future 'civilization' efforts of the government (Dickason, 2009). J.B. Macaulay's *Report on the Indian Condition* (1839) describes the economic and social plight of the 'degenerate' Indians. Macaulay (1839) surveyed an exhaustive collection of documents pertaining to transactions between First Nation groups and the government of Upper Canada. He makes observations regarding "some [of] the causes for dissatisfaction and complaint among the resident Tribes" but offers little in the way of solution to such grievances (Macaulay, 1839, p. 430). Macaulay's (1839, p. 430) most relevant observation to the work here is his argument that the Indian population "still claims the continued protection

of Her Majesty” and require the sustained benefits of the “generous Government” whose approaches he characterizes as “humane and [with] warm sympathy.”

The *Report on the Indians of Upper Canada* took a different perspective. The report was written by the Aborigines Protection Society (APS), a human rights organization concerned with the fair treatment of indigenous populations throughout the world. The report condemns the mistreatment and neglect of the Aboriginal population by both “the Home Government” and “Colonial authorities,” as well as the, “undue acquisitions of the Indian’s land” (APS, 1839, p. 4). Despite suggesting that the colonial government attempt to create a more cooperative and fair relationship between themselves and First Nations communities, the APS still believed that assimilation was the most appropriate course of action. Indeed, the report argues that civilization is the most effective way to prevent the decline of the Aboriginal population;

The introduction of civilized habits and *bona fide* conversion to Christianity having mutually promoted each other, and proved the best security against rapid diminution in numbers, and the baneful and demoralizing influence of profligate whites; it is obvious that these objects so often recommended official documents both here and in the colonies, should be promoted by those means which have hitherto been the most successful. Every encouragement should therefore be given to existing missionary settlements, and the formation of new ones should be recommended and assisted. (APS, 1839, p. 28)

*The Report on the Affairs of the Indian in Canada*, commonly referred to as The Bagot Report, in 1844 addressed the ‘Indian question’ in Canada. The report sought to legitimize the assimilation policy through the creation of discourses around the Aboriginal population (de Leeuw, 2007). It positioned Aboriginals as savage and childlike owing to their illiteracy and close relationship with nature (Parliament of Canada, 1844-1845). The report also suggested that the Aboriginal population, because of their child-like status, would require government care. This belief led the Canadian government to formally create a fiduciary relationship in which the government would act as a provider and caretaker for the Aboriginal population (Llewellyn,

2002). With this fiduciary responsibility in mind, the Canadian government, in connection with various sects of the Christian Church, created the IRS system (Llewellyn, 2002). The residential school system was positioned by the Canadian government as a method to create ‘full citizens’ who were “English-speaking Indians, accustomed to the ways of civilized life... capable of holding [their] own with its white neighbours” (DIA - CSP, 1895, p. XXVII). This process of ‘civilization’ would then allieviate the financial reponsibilities of the Federal Government’s relationship with the Aboriginal population (Llewellyn, 2002).

Government reports and literature regarding the Aboriginal population in the nineteenth century show a belief that the parents of Aboriginal children were an impediment to the ‘civilization efforts’ (Milloy, 1999). Davin (1879, p. 2), for example, argued that, “[i]f anything is to be done with the Indian we must catch them very young. The children must be kept in the circle of civilized conditions.” Aboriginal children, therefore, were believed to have the potential to be successfully molded and transformed according to Euro-Canadian norms and values. The belief that children were the only Aboriginals with such potential was the cornerstone of the residential school philosophy. The government commissioned studies, such as Egerton Ryerson’s (1847) *Report on Industrial Schools* as well as Davin’s (1879) *Report on Industrial Schools for Indian and Halfbreeds*, to address the ‘Indian problem.’ Both of these reports advocate for the significant and sustained spatial seperation of children from parents and community as the solution. As such, students were often sent to schools a significant distance from their homes. Both of these reports outlined methods that the government could use in order to realize their goals of assimilating Aboriginal peoples. They directed the abstract goal of assimilation through very real insitutions, such as the residential school. Furthermore, the

represent the material realization of the theorizations on power, discipline and discourse discussed above.

Documents created or sanctioned by the government for the use of teachers and administrators echoed these sentiments. The Indian School Bulletin (ISB), the only nationally circulated publication regarding the residential schools, outlined the expected pedagogical approaches and curriculum for the schools. The ISB also played a role in the perpetuation of discourses surrounding the civilization project and the Aboriginal population. The residential school, according to the ISB, was to “produce Indians” who were “capable of meeting the exacting demands of modern society” going on to state that “[e]ducation of every type must be utilized...and all available forces, both positive and negative” (DIA - ISB, Feb 1947, np as cited in de Leeuw, 2007, p. 146). The literature, when considered together, highlights the important role the Indian Residential Schools policy played in the broader colonial project.

## *ii. Testimonial and Academic Literature*

Since the closure of the residential schools many scholars and former students have taken up the task of addressing them. Much of my contextual understanding has been informed by the work of Miller (1996, 2000) and Milloy (1999). Both have contributed significantly to the literature on the residential school system through their research based in archival sources and interviews with former students. Both authors have argued the place of the residential school system in the larger context of the colonial project describing it as ‘the core’ of the assimilation policy (Milloy, 1999, p. 3). Miller (2000) has called the IRS system an experiment in social engineering with the goals of creating a politically docile and educated Aboriginal youth with the skills necessary to survive in the ‘modern’ world. The experiment, according to Miller (1996,

2000), failed miserably as many students experienced abuse, neglect, and serious illness at various residential schools. Many students have also recalled the lack of attention paid to their academic success at residential schools. Miller's work highlights how this failure left many students without the skills the IRS administration claimed necessary for their participation in the modern economy (Miller, 1996). Both Miller's (1996) and Milloy's (1999) works highlight the uniqueness of each residential school. Their work frequently reminds us, that no two residential school experiences were the same. The experiences of students differed across space and time and while many have condemned the system others have noted its value (Milloy, 1999; Miller, 1996). Both Milloy (1999) and Miller (1996) have addressed discipline and resistance within the residential school system. However, their discussions of discipline and resistance are not theoretically bounded, nor are they intended to be. Rather, they are discussions intended to highlight the human agency and emotions in the context of a system that sought to dehumanize and recreate Aboriginal children.

Elizabeth Graham's (1997) *The Mush Hole: Life at Two Residential Schools* is a comprehensive look into the daily experiences and struggles at two residential schools in Ontario – Mohawk IRS and Mount Elgin IRS. Graham (1997) highlights the variety of experiences students endured while at the two schools, both positive and negative. Through her interviews with former students themes of neglect, abuse and discipline arise. Some of Graham's (1997) interviewees stress the benefits of their time at the residential school and are thankful for the opportunities their education provides. Others stress the importance of friendship and efforts of resistance to their survival (Graham, 1997). Elizabeth Furniss (1995) provides a localized study of Williams Lake IRS in British Columbia and documents the complicated relationship between the Shuswap people and the the Catholic Church. Furniss (1995) argues that this complex

relationship led to a tension between the two groups regarding the education of Shuswap youth. By focusing on the deaths of two students – one after running away from the school and one by suicide – Furniss (1995, p. 15) highlights how the “ relationship between First Nations and the Canadian government, and the beliefs that have legitimized this relationship, have had tragic consequences for innocent people.” Both of these works highlight how the residential school policy had significant impacts on the students that attended them.

Perhaps the first academic work to highlight the complex and persistent resistance present in the IRS system is Haig-Brown’s (1991) *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Through her interviews with thirteen former students of Kamloops residential school Haig-Brown (1991, p. 25-26) found that

The most outstanding feature which is revealed by this study is the extent and complexity of the resistance movement which students and their families developed against the invasive presence of the residential school. These struggles for power and control might be seen as a microcosm of the ongoing struggle of the Native people with the Euro-Canadian presence in this country.

Haig-Brown (1991) argues that resistance in the residential school setting created the possibility for students to create a culture ‘of their own’ and that this was essential to their survival. de Leeuw (2007, p. 4) has also considered explicitly the notion of resistance within the residential school suggesting that;

these intimate and micro-scale oppositions were, quite literally, embodied by Aboriginal children who, with incredible tenacity and fortitude and amongst many other strategies spoke their Indigenous languages, reached out to family members and crafted art objects through which their cultures remained living.

Both of these works have made important contributions to the consideration of resistance to the colonial policy of assimilation in the context of the residential school.

The lasting impact of the residential school system has also been addressed in the literature. Schissel and Wotherspoon (2003) discuss both the immediate and long term effects of



residential school arguing that the psychological impact of colonial education has had continued negative impacts on the Aboriginal population. Corrado and Cohen (2003) and Sochting, Corrado, Cohen, Ley, and Brasfield (2007) have commented on the significant lasting impacts of the residential school experience highlighting the survivors' struggles with mental health and addiction. Rosalyn (1991) and Deiter (1991) discuss the intergenerational impacts of the residential school system on Aboriginal families and communities. Rosalyn (1991) discusses the negative impacts of the residential school experience on familial relationships arguing that communication issues, self-image problems and cultural divides have caused considerable problems in many Aboriginal families and communities.

Aboriginal scholars and residential school survivors make the most significant contributions to the literature on discipline, resistance and power relations within the residential school and beyond. Theodore Fontaine (2010, p. 28), in his recent memoir, recounts how fear was a powerful disciplinary tactic; “[m]y parents lived with the fear and belief that if we didn’t listen and practise what we were taught by the Church we would be lost forever and suffer eternal damnation in the fires of hell.” Fontaine (2010) goes on to discuss the intimate details of his residential school experience at Fort Alexander Residential school in Manitoba. Fontaine’s (2010) writing brings to light the complex and multiple power relations that existed within the residential school setting. Basil Johnston (1988, p. 19) writes about being an “inmate of Spanish [residential school].” Johnston (1988, p. 67) recalls the importance of scheduled time during his stay at Spanish as “[t]he Jesuits could regulate the day and the week with precision and guarantee that what had been planned and scheduled would come to pass as planned and scheduled.” The ability to control what students were doing at each moment of their day Johnston (1988) argues was central to the process of discipline at the IRS which aimed at the creation of docile citizens.

In her memoir Isabelle Knockwood (1992), a former student of Shubenacadie Residential School discusses how the residential school sought to discipline the bodies of students by controlling their movements, clothing and placing an emphasis on Euro-Canadian standards of hygiene. Resistance is a pervasive theme in the writing of former students as they recount their efforts to resist the totalizing control attempted by school staff. Knockwood (1992) highlights many modes of resistance students at Shubenacadie employed including physical retaliation against staff, speaking their own language, and ignoring teachers' instructions on the comportment of their bodies.

To a lesser extent previous teachers and administrators have written about the residential school system. Bernice Logan (1994), a teacher at Prince Albert, Shubenacadie and Shingwauk residential schools in the mid-twentieth century has written a book about her experiences motivated by the desire to challenge the negative view of the IRS system and its staff. Logan (1994, p.1) questions the value of student's memories of their residential school experiences claiming they are "faulty." Throughout the text, Logan (1994, p. 183) supports the claims of Missionary May Titley who wrote "Anglican Indian schools were staffed with dedicated Christian workers, wanting to do their best in the interests of the Indian Children..." Logan (1994, p.183) goes on to deny the occurrences of sexual abuse stating that "I never heard of any sexual abuse in any of the three schools I knew. But there was plenty of talk of sexual abuse in the children's own homes." While Logan's (1994) writing is not representative of the views or beliefs of all former IRS administration and staff, I believe it provides important insight into the lingering effects of colonial discourses. Furthermore, it highlights the necessity of efforts towards truth telling, reconciliation and healing as even the purest of motivations on the part of school staff cannot excuse the instances of abuse that occurred across the IRS system.

*e. Curriculum/Pedagogy and the Residential School*

As Richard Shaull (preface to Freire, 1972, p.15, original emphasis) writes, “[t]here is no such thing as a *neutral* educational process.” Rather, education is used to communicate specific ideals, values, ethics and social norms to students and to promote adherence to these standards. This is true of the Canadian IRS system as well. Officials at the residential schools sought to transform students through curriculum and physical routines. Cleghorn and Barakett (2000) have argued that school curriculums have the ability to significantly influence students that endure them. de Leeuw (2009) suggests that, in the context of the IRS, the curriculum and pedagogy aimed to dispossess Aboriginal students of their culture, social traditions, spiritual beliefs and traditional oral methods of knowledge transmission. Through such dispossession the residential school curriculum sought to bring students in conformity with Victorian ideals and ethics (Milloy, 1999).

Since the late 1960’s educational theory has begun to recognize the multiple facets of school curriculum (see for example, Beauchamp, 1968; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Eisner, 1985; Longstreet & Shane, 1993 and Giroux, 2002). From this literature we have gained a large and expanding list of curriculums that are being enacted in educational settings simultaneously including the overt, the hidden and the null. The overt curriculum refers to the prescribed learning objectives as set by school officials. This may refer to the subjects and topics covered within the school. The hidden curriculum can be defined as the “kinds of learnings children derive from the very nature and organizational design of the public school, as well as from the behaviour and attitudes of teachers and administrators” (Longstreet & Shane, 1993, p. 46). Finally, the ‘null curriculum’ refers to what is *not* present in the prescribed curriculum and is not taught in schools (Eisner, 1985). Miller (1996) has described the overt curriculum of the IRS as

containing the following topics; English, 'general knowledge', writing, arithmetic, geography, history, ethics, reading, recitation, vocal music, calisthenics, and religion. Within these subjects, however, the content often contained derogatory messages about Aboriginals (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). Students then, endured an educational experience that simultaneously degraded their culture and language while the null curriculum ignored the Aboriginal perspective on history altogether. The absence of Aboriginal views on historical interactions attempted to further transform the Aboriginal child into a docile recipient of European perspectives. Furthermore, this absence also discounted the oral traditions that were the primary method of teaching in many Aboriginal communities and were thus an attempt at fetishizing the written word as legitimate and concurrently discounting Aboriginal languages and oral traditions.

Curriculum, both contemporarily and in the IRS context is inherently spatialized. Glover's (2008) discussion of the colonial city of Lahore, Pakistan and the notion of colonial spatial imagination is useful in such a consideration. Glover (2008) argues that the effective administration of colonial Pakistan by the British government depended on the observation and analysis of the material phenomenon of the city. Furthermore, that in order for the material phenomenon of the city to be useful to the discourses of colonialism, the colonial powers needed to denote and create the 'proper' distribution of objects in the space of the city (Glover, 2008). Despite the fact that Glover (2008) was talking about the colonial management of the city, I see this conceptualization of the monitoring and use of space of the colonial city applicable and useful to the discussion of IRS curriculum. This application is twofold. First, the content of IRS curriculum is directly related to observations made and conclusions reached through the reports identified above. Secondly, the overt, hidden and null curriculums all play a role in prescribing the 'proper' distribution of people and objects in space according to Euro-Canadian norms and

attempted to indoctrinate Aboriginal students with these beliefs through various disciplinary tactics.

Lastly, Schissel and Wotherspoon's (2003) work shows that students in the residential school system struggled to adapt to this strict, heavily structured learning environment. Pre-contact education for Aboriginal children was experiential in nature and was largely informal. Their curriculum was based upon the skills necessary to survive and thrive, their classroom was often a 'natural' setting and their expected behaviour based upon respectful attentiveness and listening (Miller, 1996). The residential school, however, not only offered a curriculum but also a drastically different learning environment that, Schissel and Wotherspoon (2003, p. 40) argue, "created kids unable to survive in either world."

*f. Autoethnography and Resistance*

My understanding of autoethnography is primarily based in Pratt's (1992) conceptualization of the term. Pratt (1992, p. 7, original emphasis) discusses autoethnography or autoethnographical expression as "instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms." Furthermore, Pratt (1992) argues the importance of recognizing that autoethnographical representations are not "'authentic' or autochthonous forms of self-representation" but rather "autoethnography involves partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror" (Pratt, 1992, p. 7). Therefore, Pratt (1992) stresses, that such autoethnographic texts must not be considered as simply authentic self-representations of the colonized.

Also important to the discussion of autoethnographical elements of student art is the literature concerning transculturation. As Butz and Besio (2004, p. 351) argue, transculturation

refers to the “process whereby members of each group [colonized and colonizer] select and invent from materials transmitted to them from the other group through the relations of the contact.” Such instances of transculturation and autoethnographic representation, then, include a mixture of accommodation and resistance (Butz & Besio, 2004). Ethnographers have traditionally used the term transculturation to describe an occurrence of the colonized absorbing and appropriating cultural material from the colonizing group for their own purposes (Pratt, 1992). The works considered here, however, show that it is important to be aware that instances of transculturation do not occur unilaterally.

Butz and Besio (2004) advocate for an ‘autoethnographic sensibility’ wherein researchers are attentive to autoethnographical elements of self-representation. Complicating this matter, however, is Foucault’s (2000) argument that to represent someone interferes with their ability to represent themselves (as cited in Butz and Besio, 2004). Thus, representing the autoethnographical elements of student art is a complicated act. In order to speak to the autoethnographical elements of student produced art in the residential school I must also consider intent. Scott (1985) argues that we can infer intent, and resistance, from action regardless of outcome. However, scholars have and continue to debate whether or not inferring intent is possible or responsible (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). However, Scott’s (1985) argument that intent is at times a better indicator of resistance than actions is integral to the consideration of autoethnographical elements of student art in the residential school.

In this chapter I have outlined the broad literature relevant to this thesis. The works considered here come from varied sources and disciplines. The literature pertaining to the IRS system has begun to conceptualize the theorization of discipline and resistance in the residential school context. When considered collectively the literature promotes an interrogative approach

to historical resources pertaining to the Canadian residential schools system. Taking such a critical approach in regards to the historic documentation of the IRS is necessary to combat the methodological complications discussed in the following chapter.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

The historical relationship between Indigenous communities and academic researchers is both complicated and tense. The historical methods, assumptions, and representations of Indigenous communities by academic researchers have historically been embedded in a larger project of colonialism. As such the products of such research have often depicted the ‘Native’ only in relation to this colonial project, suggesting that the ‘Native’ did not exist before the gaze of settler society (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2005). This representation has, until recently, resulted in the simplified version of the ‘Native’ pervading scholarly literature. Such a simplified version often depicted the Aboriginal population as a single entity ignoring the vast cultural, political, economic and social differences amongst Aboriginal communities. Tuhiwai-Smith (1999, p.1) argues a tension between Aboriginal communities and academia has resulted wherein “[t]he word itself, ‘research’” becoming “probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary.” It is a fundamental goal of this work to avoid contributing to this tension. As such, it is important that I acknowledge some important epistemological and methodological considerations that have come up throughout my research. In this section, I address the following; issues of representation, resource accessibility, complications arising from the use of archives and ethical implications. I then move on to discuss the specific methodological strategies employed in this research.

#### *i. Methodological Considerations*

This project is enmeshed in issues of representation. Duncan and Ley (1993) argue that the major responsibility of academics is to represent the world to others. This task, however, is no simple undertaking. In the academic context few questioned the ability of scholars to



represent the world accurately and objectively prior to the late 1980s. Since then many have offered critiques of this assumption. Across disciplines this period has been referred to as the ‘crisis of representation’ and denotes a time in academic thought when scholars began to recognize that “language (and discourse) does not reflect the world, as in a mirror” (Graham, 2005, p. 268). Furthermore, it addresses the ‘other’ as historically constituted rather than ontologically given (Myers, 2009). This problematizes the idea that representation is a neutral and objective act. Many scholars in the social sciences now argue that representation is a social process that can never be disassociated from the set of contexts in which it was created (see for example; Rosenau, 1992; Duncan & Ley, 1993; Bond & Gilliam, 1994 and Hannah, 2005). Such acknowledgements force us to consider how research agendas and the methodological strategies scholars employ say as much about us as they do about the people we seek to represent. Myers (2009) observes that this creates a research context in which we are constantly negotiating the ‘Other’, the personal and the political.

If we accept that representation cannot be separated from its social, political, cultural and economic contexts then we must also understand that it can never be disconnected from our own positionality (Scott, 2009). This complicates the research here in two ways. Firstly, as much of my research is based in archival documents and manuscripts I must contend with the issue of historical representations. Bond and Gilliam (1994) remind us that the ability to represent history is both an articulation and a source of power. They write (1994, p. 2) this is because “power and economic domination establish one rendering of history and culture as objective and ethically neutral and another as subjective and partisan.” As such, the social contexts related to the creation of many documents highlight the benefits of colonial discourse while discounting Aboriginal forms of knowledge. Documents created for or by colonial powers, however, are still

crucial to this research as they provide insight into both the ideologies and contexts of the period. A second complication arises when considering how I, as a mixed heritage though culturally non-Aboriginal, researcher, may represent the students of the residential school system throughout this work. I do not wish to contribute to the subjugation of Aboriginal voices. However, I also take seriously Jacob's (2001, p. 731) argument that the "post-colonial politics of not speaking for the other" may result in the continued silencing of subaltern peoples (as cited in de Leeuw, 2007, p. 2). As such it is my hope that by considering both the official records and products of government officials, missionaries and teachers as well as crucial student testimonials, I may expand the consideration of IRS without presuming to speak on behalf of, or in place of, those who attended these institutions.

Another important consideration for this research is resource accessibility. Despite the large number of publications on residential schools in Canada I have struggled to locate and gain access to primary source material. Throughout this research process, I approached several institutions with connections to the IRS system. Some of these institution were either unwilling, or unable, to allow me access to their archival resources. However, other institutions did allow me access to their archives. Thus, the primary research documents for this project have been gathered from the following sources; the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development archives, the Shingwauk Project Archives, and the Anglican Church of Canada General Synod Archives (GSA). Realizing the issues associated with access to primary source material, I am grateful to the Shingwauk Project Archives and the Anglican Church of Canada GSA for allowing me to complete this research in their archives.

The history of Ontario, and indeed all of Canada, is closely tied with the history of Aboriginal peoples and communities. However, Aboriginal views of history have been

historically neglected resulting in a predominantly Eurocentric historical record. This problem extends into the archives that were consulted for this project. Thus, working with archives requires a critical eye and interrogative spirit. As Trace (2002, p. 139) discusses, people have traditionally viewed archives as “capable of bearing ‘authentic testimony of the actions, processes and procedures which brought them into being’...” This view, however, has changed in recent years as scholars acknowledge that records and archives simultaneously provide information on those who create them as well as those represented in the content (Trace, 2002). Similarly, Brown and Davis-Brown (1998) caution researchers to be aware that the archive is a depository of a community’s history and memory and is compiled in order to create a collective identity. Given this, the political and ideological motivations behind the information contained therein must be considered. Thus, archives, operating as institutions under the influence of various establishments, both public and private, have specific mandates which guide decision making regarding their content (Eastwood, 2010). Recent scholarship has also shown that archives are not neutral locations that “document society by receiving and keeping records and knowledge” (Nesmith, 2010, p. 170). Rather, choices made by archivists aid in “shaping societal understandings” of historical events (Nesmith, 2010, p. 170). In Canada, archivists claim that underfunding prevents them from doing much more than meeting their minimum legal obligations (Nesmith, 2010). Whether caused by financial limitations, institutional mandates or epistemological beliefs, it is clear that archives always present partial collections and are not capable of representing the ‘whole story.’ Academic work based in archival research, then, requires reflexivity in order to avoid reproducing the discourses found in archival collections.

It is crucial that scholars acknowledge what is *not* in the archive when completing research regarding the IRS system in Canada. As Sadowski (2006, p. 3) writes, “there was a

general Federal Government policy to destroy many government files and that there was a very high level of records destruction activity that occurred between 1936 and 1956.” This policy has resulted in significant loss of documents from the residential school record. Missing documents include principal’s diaries, attendance reports, accident reports as well as general correspondence (Sadowski, 2006). It is also important to acknowledge the absence of Aboriginal voices in the DIA resources; teachers, principals, missionaries and Indian agents created much of the RG-10 files.<sup>15</sup> It seems axiomatic, then, that these records are influenced by those particular subject positions. Nevertheless, from time to time, these documents *speak for* the students, parents, or relatives of IRS students.<sup>16</sup> Occasionally, the voices of children can be found in primary documents, such as the school newspapers and student notebooks discussed in chapter seven. It is, however, crucial to bear in mind that these documents were subject to teacher perusal and possible censorship.

It is clear that significant historiographic considerations are bound tightly to the ethical considerations of this project. Particularly, government documents must be approached with meticulous care. The social and political climate which fostered the Canadian IRS system as well as the government documents discussed here are extremely hostile towards the Aboriginal community. For this reason many of the texts project the Aboriginal community in a very derogatory fashion. It is important to not use such derogatory statements in a careless fashion,

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<sup>15</sup> The RG-10 files are historical records created by the Department of Indian Affairs, now Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), relating to Indian affairs in Canada. The files contain information, chiefly correspondence, on reserve management, agriculture, funding and finances as well as education. The files are organized into four series; pre-confederation Canada, field office records, land records and headquarters records. Information pertaining to the IRS system are mostly located in the headquarters records, school files series.

<sup>16</sup> For example Reverend E. F. Wilson, principal of the Shingwauk Home in Sault Ste. Marie stated “On the whole, however, the children seemed to be wonderfully contented and happy, and all went merrily and cheerfully day after day... and seemed to enjoy their life” (Wilson, 1886, ch. XXVIII).

but rather to use them in a way that advocates for a decolonized approach to qualitative research as well as one which addresses the historiographical challenges of using such resources.

Lastly, there are important ethical considerations when completing research on the residential school system. I agree with Milloy's (1999) argument that it would be unethical to interview former residential school students about their experiences without having the proper resources available for post-interview care. As a consequence of my inability to provide such care I have based the majority of my research for this project in archival research as well as secondary source material. However, I acknowledge that in order to contextualize the instances of cultural persistence through the creation of art, interviews were both helpful and appropriate. As such I have spoken to two individuals about this project. The first is an Aboriginal artist, though not a former student. The second is the Director of Research at the AHF. I discuss my rationale for this small number of interviewees in the following section.

## *ii. Data Collection*

As discussed above I collected data from multiple sources including; historical information and past testimonials in published literature, government documents, scholarly writing, archival material, and, finally, interviews. Throughout this section I outline how I undertook my research project and data collection. I began my research by reading the comprehensive books by Miller (1996) and Milloy (1999) as well as the important work done by de Leeuw (2007). Next, I began to contact institutions and archives which might hold material pertaining to the residential school system in Canada. I also searched online for possible libraries and archives that may have had student produced works in their collection – discovering eight institutions in all. I then contacted these institutions to see if they had such material as well as to inquire about accessing them. I was granted access to two private archives, The Shingwauk

Project and the General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church. At these archives I located a fair number of student produced resources. They include; two grade two social studies notebooks, one set of student drawings collected by a former teacher at Shingwauk including fifty-four images produced by students, one student drawing tucked in a notebook though not – seemingly - associated with any curricular content, and school newsletters and newspapers and yearbooks with a variety of student produced drawings and stories produced by students at five schools.<sup>17</sup>

I also looked at government records accessed through Library and Archives Canada online. In order to supplement the documents located through my archival research, I then began to locate and read previously published testimonials and manuscripts on the IRS system. Lastly, I spoke with the two individuals mentioned in the last section with the intention of gaining a better understanding of the role of art and creative expression in Aboriginal culture. I acknowledge that Aboriginal communities differ in their historical experiences, spiritual beliefs and political alignments. However, it would have been impossible to interview an individual from every community connected with the schools and students discussed here. My aspiration to gain some understanding of the role art and creative expression play in the Aboriginal context broadly led me to interview two people who were willing to talk to me and who had long and intimate interactions with Aboriginal communities. The purpose of my interviews was to aid my own readings of student produced documents. These interviews complemented the literature I have reviewed when forming conclusions about the available data. The interviews were both provided the same set of open ended questions (see appendix one for the full list of questions).

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<sup>17</sup> The newspapers considered here come from the following schools; St. Michael's IRS at Alert Bay, British Columbia, Cariboo IRS at William's Lake, British Columbia, St. Cyprian's IRS at Peigan Reserve, Brocket, Alberta, Poplar Hill IRS at Poplar Hill, Ontario and Shingwauk at Sault. Ste. Marie, Ontario.

The questions sought answers that discussed art in the broader context rather than specifically in relation to the trauma of residential schools.

*iii. Data Analysis*

Considering the wealth of data I was able to collect, data analysis became a complicated process. I employed a mixed methods approach to organize and interpret it. I began by using discourse analysis to investigate the textual information I had collected regarding discipline, curriculum and pedagogy in the residential school system. Discourse analysis as a method is notoriously hard to define. Wetherell and Potter (1992) argue that the desire to define the process of discourse analysis is problematic as it is created from a discourse around analysis which is grounded in quantitative methodologies. As such, few scholars have explicitly outlined the processes of their discourse analysis (Berg, 2009). Some scholars, however, including Rose (2005) and Waitt (2005) have attempted to explain some key methodological components central to conducting discourse analysis. These key components include; letting go of preexisting categories, becoming familiar with the texts being researched, coding themes, identifying ‘regimes of truth’ or discourses present, acknowledging inconsistencies, identifying absences, and recognizing social contexts (Berg, 2009).

Benford and Gough (2006) provide a rare, and helpful, detailed explanation of discourse analysis as methodology. The first step, is to describe the texts to be analyzed in various ways and to observe areas of concordance across texts. Next, signs within the texts are itemized and particular attention is paid to the context of the signs within the text. Thirdly, “[t]he ways of speaking that served to organize and reconstitute the objects, and the discourses that served to hold them together in various ways, [are] then explored” (Benford and Gough, 2006, p. 431). During this time the researcher pays attention to areas of contradiction and agreement in the text.

Next, terminology is developed to describe the identified discourses and to examine how they operated to “naturalize the things to which they refer” (Benford and Gough, 2006, p. 431). Lastly, Benford and Gough (2006) stress the importance of acknowledging the presence of counter hegemonic signs and discourses within the texts. These steps formed the structure of my analysis.

When looking at the pieces of student work I employed a strategy based, to some extent, on semiotics. Semiotics interrogates how images make meanings. It does so by providing a set of tools to deconstruct an image and trace how its components work in a larger system of meaning (Rose, 2005). Semiotic analysis offers a useful vocabulary to identify signs, items which stand for something else in culture, referents, the actual object in the world which the sign represents, and signifieds, the concept or object being represented (Rose, 2005). The identification of signs, however, relies heavily on what early proponents such as Morris (1938) called its ‘scientific approach’ (Noth, 1995). The structuralist foundations of semiotics often discounts human agency and thus, images with multiple meanings are discounted or reduced to their most common meaning (Rose, 2005). Nevertheless, when considering autoethnographical elements of student art, the idea of polysemy, images with multiple meanings, is also important (Rose, 2005). As such while the vocabulary of semiotics is useful the incorporation of discourse enables a more nuanced analysis. This allows me to think about the ways in which student’s creative expressions reflect and constitute the social world in which they were created.

I also relied, in part, on content analysis. Content analysis is traditionally concerned with quantitative coding according to frequency and deductive reasoning (Baxter, 2009). However, for the purposes of this research I found an inductive, qualitative approach to content analysis is more appropriate. Baxter (2009) argues that a qualitative approach to content analysis



emphasizes the creator of the message and considers how the message is produced, the themes present as well as these marked by absence. This method of flexible grouping enables me to produce an inductive approach to the creation of codes. Although I keep a numerical record of phenomenon, I argue that frequency does not necessarily equate to importance, therefore, it is integral to my analysis to consider the intended audience and social context of the art while analyzing trends within the documents.

Residential school research must be approached with significant care and precision. Thus, I strive to engage in the proposed research in a way that does not perpetuate the colonial discourses which discount Aboriginal beliefs and cultures. I, like de Leeuw (2007, p.19), seek to “create a greater understanding of colonial [Canada] without contributing, through carelessness or lack of thought, to any project that makes it more difficult for Indigenous people to be who they are or want to be.” For this reason, I have utilized a critical visual methodology which considers the content, the social conditions in which the visual material was created, as well as, the possible effects of the images themselves (Rose, 2005). I have employed what I view as a decolonizing qualitative research approach within this project. This requires a critical engagement with, and reflexive understanding of, not only the temporal sequence of colonial events or the geographical place or structure of the residential school but also of the interactions among the historical, geographical, cultural and spiritual realms. This begins in chapter four with my discussion of the historical context of the IRS system, wherein I explore the role of the residential school in the wider framework of Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal relations.

## **Chapter Four: Historical Context**

The residential school system in Canada operated as a material representation of the complex relationship between the British, and later Canadian, government, Aboriginal communities and religious groups. This chapter provides insight into how these complicated relationships created the circumstances motivating an official government policy of assimilation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Throughout this chapter I shall place the IRS system in the broader context of Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal social and political relations. In order to achieve this end, it is necessary to provide some contextual information pertaining to Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian relationships in both the past and present.

In the first section of this chapter I provide some information about European-Aboriginal relations since contact was made in the sixteenth century. Here, I address the complex and changing relationship between the colonial French and British, and subsequently Canadian, authorities, church officials and Aboriginal communities at a broad scale. Next, I address some specific policy developments regarding Aboriginal individuals and communities throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Thirdly, I consider the development of formal state-sponsored education in Canada for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth. Here, I also discuss the social and political circumstances that led to the dismantling of the residential school system. Lastly, I discuss the lingering effects of the IRS system in the contemporary Canadian context. I pay particular attention to the current political, social and cultural climate that has led to the creation of the TRC. I claim that understanding the contemporary political and social policies relating to the IRS system is crucial to evaluating the impact of the IRS on Aboriginal children as well as their ability to resist the goals of colonial education.

*i. European – Aboriginal Relations*

Miller (2000, p. xii) argues that “the nature of a relationship between two peoples of different backgrounds is largely determined by the reasons they have for interacting.”

According to Miller (2000), the European- Aboriginal relationship progressed through three distinct phases dictated by their motivations for interaction since contact. The first of these phases is cooperation, as European explorers and missionaries required assistance from Aboriginal communities for their survival in the early context period. During this period the two groups engaged in economic and military alliances. A period of coercion, Miller (2000) argues, followed as the survival of European/Canadian communities was no longer dependent on the Aboriginal population. Lastly, a relationship of conflict has developed between the two groups as Aboriginal communities engage in behaviour that runs counter to the goals of the Canadian government (Miller, 2000). This model can be usefully applied to the historical discussion of the European, and later Canadian, and Aboriginal relationship; it provides helpful classifications through which we are able to look at historical Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal relations. However, I argue that the periods of coercion and conflict cannot be defined as temporally distinct phases. Government attempts at coercing the Aboriginal population through policies of assimilation were often met with resistance, creating a continued conflict between the two groups throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century.

*a. Cooperation*

The exploration and settlement of North America by European colonists was motivated largely by economic and missionary desires. Upon their arrival in North America from the fifteenth century onwards European newcomers faced several challenges to their survival. In

order to deal with these challenges Europeans often utilized ‘Indian informants’ to gain crucial knowledge about the North American landscape (Miller, 2000). Cooperating with Aboriginal communities was particularly important to missionaries. Early missionaries arrived in North America during the sixteenth century with aims to fulfill what they saw as their Christian duty – to convert non-believers (Furniss, 1995). This belief is bolstered by Jesus’ last words to his disciples as recorded in Matthew (28: 19-20), “[g]o, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Good News Bible). These words, to early missionaries such as the Jesuits and Recollets, provided justification for their proselytizing efforts. Missionaries believed that the Aboriginal population, though savage and illiterate had the capacity to ascend to a civilized state through the teachings of Christianity (Grant, 1984; Furniss, 1995). Thus missionary societies were created, some large and well financed and others small, these groups recruited and ordained pious white men and women who were then sent to communicate the contents of the bible in Aboriginal communities (Higham, 2000).

Despite their paternalistic attitudes many missionaries recognized the need for Aboriginal assistance and guidance in order to ensure their survival in the unfamiliar and hostile climate of North America (Miller, 2000). As such, much of the missionary work was completed within the realms of Aboriginal communities. The importance of education in the missionary project was recognized early as Jesuits in Quebec built a residential school for Aboriginal youth as early as 1630 (Furniss, 1995). Miller (2000, p. 41-2) argues that the development and maintenance of a cooperative relationship between missionaries and Aboriginal communities was a necessity as, “[i]f the Aboriginal population was hostile, missionaries could quickly find themselves achieving not their primary objective conversion, but the second, personal martyrdom.” These Christian

missionaries, in their effort to gain access to Aboriginal children for their school, worked closely with Aboriginal parents. Consistently attempting to show them the benefits gained from a lifestyle based on sedentary, agriculturally lifestyle grounded in Christian values (Furniss, 1995).

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth century was a period of intense competition in the fur trade between French and British interests. Both parties, however, shared a common reliance on Aboriginal people as suppliers in the fur trade. Aboriginal communities also became increasingly reliant on the European materials gained from trade during this time (Miller, 2000). The increasing British presence in North America led to fierce competition in the fur trade and ongoing disputes over land causing a century of warfare. The tension between the French and English required that these European powers align themselves with various Aboriginal groups militarily. Of particular relevance to the discussion of cooperative Euro-Aboriginal relations is the Seven Years War, and particularly the North American theatre of that war. That conflict highlights the importance of Euro-Aboriginal cooperation in the military context. In North America, the Seven Years War (1754-1763) was a conflict between the British and French as well as their various Aboriginal alliances. The war culminated in North America with the *Treaty of Paris* in 1763, through which France effectively ceded most of its territory in North America (Bumstead, 2003). Following the Treaty of Paris, King George III went on to issue *The Royal Proclamation*, 1763, which detailed the administration of the new land as well as outlining the relationship between Aboriginals and the British government.

*The Royal Proclamation* set out to regulate the relations between Aboriginal groups and settlers in British North America (Miller, 2009). The *Proclamation* focused on the issue of land acquisition with the objective of maintaining peaceful relations between British subjects and Aboriginal communities. The 'Indian clauses' of the *Proclamation* deal explicitly with territorial

rights and were intended as a pacifying gesture towards the Aboriginal population (Miller, 2009). The clauses stated; that only the Crown, or its representatives, could engage in treaty negotiations with First Nation groups, that discussions regarding land acquisition must occur publically, and that other First Nation communities should be made aware of such interactions (Miller, 2009). There is ongoing debate about whether or not the *Proclamation* recognized pre-existing Aboriginal peoples right to self-determination (Dickason, 2009, Godlewska, et al., 2010). The crucial point underpinning the *Proclamation*, however, is its description of Aboriginal land rights. The *Proclamation* stated that all lands not ceded to or purchased by the British government in the North America were lands considered ‘reserved’ for Aboriginal peoples use (Dickason, 2009). The Crown, however, retained the right to extinguish ‘Indian title’ at any time. Thus, ‘Indian title’ meant only that Aboriginal communities had the right to occupy and to use of the land, but true ownership remained with the sovereign (Dickason, 2009). Conflicts would later arise regarding the details of the *Proclamation* and the treatment of Aboriginal land claims. Despite these conflicts Euro-Aboriginal military alliances and trade agreements were maintained throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. These military alliances continued through the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

While Miller (2000) suggests that the cooperative relationship experienced by European and Aboriginal groups until the early nineteenth century was mutually beneficial, he recognizes it was not a simple relationship. To say that the European and Aboriginal populations were participating in a cooperative relationship is not to suggest the absence of asymmetrical power relations between the two. The Europeans during this time were the dominant partners in the commercial relationship reaping the majority of the profit (Miller, 2000). European interests were often at the forefront of military alliances and strategies as well.

*b. Coercion and Conflict*

In the eyes of the British government the usefulness of the Aboriginal population as trading partners and military allies declined in the years after the War of 1812. At this point the relationship between the European settlers and the Aboriginal population changed significantly. The British exchequer was under significant strain after the cost of the Seven Years War, the American Revolution and the War of 1812. Administrators tried to find ways to deal with this debt. They debated expenditures involved in maintaining the DIA, and its continued usefulness. Because the DIA was, since its inception, a military department many was thought unnecessary during this new period of peace in North America (Binnema & Hutchings, 2005).

Colonial Secretary Sir George Murray ended the debate over the fate of the DIA in 1830. He transferred it to civilian control and charged it with the responsibility of dealing with the 'Indian problem' in Canada. Colonial officials now viewed First Nations as an economic and social burden and began to develop policies of state sanctioned assimilation and coercion. The years between 1830 and confederation in 1867 saw the colonial government increase efforts to control the behaviour and movements of the Aboriginal population. Upon transferring control of the DIA to the civilian sphere, Sir George Murray also altered its mandate stating;

that the course which hitherto been taken in dealing with these [i.e. Aboriginal] people, has had reference to the advantages which might be derived from their friendship in times of war, rather than to any settled purpose of gradually reclaiming them from a state of barbarism, and of introducing amongst them the industrious and peaceful habits of civilized life. (1830, 88 in Miller, 2009, p. 105)

Here we can see the beginning of government financed, efforts to use coercion to engage with the 'Indian problem.'

A debate began regarding the best method of dealing with the Aboriginal population. Central to this debate was the discourse of 'Aboriginal as savage.' The discussions centered

around two constructions of the Aboriginal as an unredeemable ‘savage;’ the ‘noble savage’ and the ‘degenerate savage.’ Both of these understandings led to similar desires to increase colonial control over the movement and behaviour of the Aboriginal population. However, they presented very different views of the Aboriginal population and, as a result, solutions as to how to deal with the ‘Indian problem.’ The colonial understanding of the Aboriginal as ‘noble savage’ was based in the philosophy of romantic primitivism (Dickason, 1997; Binnema & Hutchings, 2005). Following this line of philosophical thought the American Indian “became part of the *bon savage* or Noble Savage tradition” that accompanied the “paradisiacal mythology of Western civilization” (Berkhofer, 1979, p. 73). In this philosophy the Aboriginal population’s closeness with nature and aversion to materialism creates them as innately different from their European counterparts (Binnema & Hutchings, 2005, Francis, D., 2011). Champions of the perspective of the ‘noble Indian’ revered First Nations people for their “great calm” and “dignity” and celebrated their lives of “liberty, simplicity and innocence” (Berkhofer, 1979, p. 28). Opposing this view, however, is the notion of the Aboriginal as ‘degenerate savage.’ Here the Aboriginals nomadic lifestyle and illiteracy positions them as politically, economically, socially, and morally inferior to Europeans (Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999).

Though very different in their understanding of the Aboriginal, these opposing discourses aligned with the two suggestions for solving the ‘Indian problem.’ The first of these solutions proposed was the removal of Aboriginal peoples from their traditional homelands and their relocation to segregated lands (Binnema & Hutchings, 2005). The second option was to civilize Aboriginal communities by facilitating their assimilation into European society. Proponents of each of these solutions viewed them as the more humane option. While both were attempted, the civilization option was formally adopted by the Imperial and later Federal Government of



Canada. Some, such as Sir Francis Bond Head, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada from 1836-1838, believed the relocation of Aboriginal populations was a superior option. He argued it would allow them to maintain their culture and promote higher standards in their character. In support of relocation Head argued that,

[e]very Person of sound Mind in this Country who is disinterested in their [Aboriginal] conversion, and who is acquainted with the Indian character, will agree –

1. That an Attempt to make Farmers of the Red Men has been, generally speaking, a complete Failure;
2. That congregating them for the Purpose of Civilization has implanted more vices that it has eradicated; and, consequently,
3. That the greatest Kindness we can perform towards these intelligent, simple-minded People, is to remove and fortify them as much as possible from all Communication with the Whites. (1836, p. 125 in Binnema & Hutchings, 2005, p. 122)

Murray, however, concluded that the ‘savage’ nature of the Aboriginal population could only be eradicated through an effort of European ‘civilization.’ Thus, the state sanctioned civilization project began.

The period of conflict, Miller (2000) argues, is ongoing, as Aboriginal communities and individuals resist the colonial and religious agendas which seek to assimilate them. However, it is crucial to recognize that conflict, and resistance, between Aboriginal communities and European settlers has a long history. With the diminished need for Aboriginals as allies, policy focused on reducing costs and making social adjustments. This section has attempted to demonstrate administrators efforts to deal with the ‘Indian problem.’

## *ii. Indian policy leading to the IRS*

In the previous section I briefly outlined the complex European/Canadian- Aboriginal relationship in the broader context of colonial history. In this section I highlight how specific acts of government legislation were used throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century as attempts to assimilate the Aboriginal population. Following Murray’s declaration of the

government's responsibility to civilize the Aboriginal population in 1830 several key pieces of legislation were passed in an effort to support this cause.

The *Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of Indian Tribes in this Province, and to Amend the Laws relating to Indians, 1857* (hereafter referred to as the *Gradual Civilization Act*) is one such policy. The act was the first government document which made assimilation an express goal. The act sought to bestow a limiting enfranchisement upon the Aboriginal population. This was achieved by granting franchise to literate adult men and then by extension their families. Enfranchisement, however, did not guarantee the right to vote. Rather, it served the assimilation project as it removed "all distinctions between the legal rights and liabilities of Indians and those of other British subjects" (Moss, W., et al., 1991, para 6). In 1860 the Imperial government officially handed over control of the DIA to the Province of Canada. The Province of Canada maintained the drive towards assimilation of the Aboriginal population. The *British North America Act* (BNA) now referred to as the *Constitution Act*, of 1867, created the Federal Dominion of Canada and outlined how the powers of government would be divided between the Federal Government and the provinces. Section 91, sub-section 24 of the *Constitution Act* gives the Federal Government the authority to legislate with regard to Indians and Indian land (Rice & Snyder, 2008). The *Constitution Act*, however also assigned education as a responsibility of the provincial government (Johnson, 1968). This division of power left control of the education of Aboriginal youth in the hands of the Federal Government, while the responsibility for non-Aboriginal youth lay with the provinces. Such a division created complications and would lead to conflict throughout the IRS period and beyond.

In 1869, the newly created Federal Government of Canada passed *An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the better Management of Indian Affairs and to extend the*

*provisions of the Act 31<sup>st</sup> Victoria*. Essentially an amendment to the *Gradual Civilization Act* the act had a few central components. Firstly, it ‘allowed’ the election of band chiefs and councils on reservations. This subsequently outlawed traditional forms of governance. The Superintendent General of Indian Affairs had to approve elected officials (Rice & Snyder, 2008). The act also precluded women from participating in these elections. Furthermore, the act prohibited the sale of alcohol to Aboriginal individuals as the government attempted to ‘protect’ them from such vices (Rice & Snyder, 2008). Such laws make clear that the government viewed the Aboriginal population as incapable of caring for themselves – and legally framed them as such. Finally, the act removed any voluntary element to the enfranchisement of Aboriginals and the accompanying loss of their official Indian status. With this act any woman who married a non-Aboriginal man immediately lost their status and any children created in the marriage were not entitled to status (Moss et al., 1991). The forcible enfranchisement of Aboriginal individuals and the codification of who was and was not considered an ‘Indian’ were vital to the assimilation project. The act also allowed reserve land to be divided into lots which were then assigned to individuals (Lawrence, 2004). Women, however, lost their allocation of land if they married non-Native men and if they became widows of an Aboriginal husband they could only inherit one-third of the property (Lawrence, 2004). Such divisive land allocation policies played an important role in the assimilation project as Aboriginal peoples were increasingly separated from their communities. From a Foucauldian perspective these government policies can be seen as the materialization of disciplinary power, achieved through techniques of classification and surveillance of the Aboriginal population.

In 1876, the *Indian Act* was created as an attempt to consolidate all pre-Confederation legislation regarding the Aboriginal population. The fundamental purpose of the act was – and

remains today - the continuation of assimilation through formal policy (Cairns, 2000; Dickason, 2009). The act contains the formal definition of the 'status Indian' and the requirement that one's name be on the Federal Government's Indian register in order to retain status (Moss et al., 1991; Miller, 2009). Furthermore, the act defined the relationship between the government and Aboriginals as that of trustee and ward; "Under the *Indian Act*, First Nations people were legally children, and their legal parent, the Federal Government, had the right and responsibility to make decisions on their behalf" (Miller, 2009, p. 190). This decision making responsibility intimately affected the lives and abilities of First Nation communities. Through this act the government gained the power to impose a band council on the reserve as well as the power to interfere with reserve governance (Moss, et al, 1991).<sup>18</sup>

Attempts to control the movements and behaviours of Aboriginals became even more overt in the years following the *Indian Act*. In 1884, the DIA passed laws that placed limitations on Aboriginal rights to cultural expression through traditional dance and costumes (Rice & Snyder, 2008). The DIA also enacted pass laws that, although later deemed illegal, required individuals to gain permission from the local Indian Agents before leaving reserve lands (Miller, 1996). The *Electoral Franchise Act* of 1885 extended Federal franchise to Aboriginal men excluding those:

Indians in Manitoba, British Columbia, Keewatin and the North-West Territories, and any Indian on any reserve elsewhere in Canada who is *not* in possession and occupation of a separate and distinct tract of land in such reserve, and whose improvements on such

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<sup>18</sup> The *Indian Act* has undergone over twenty amendments since 1867. Perhaps the most significant amendment is Bill C-31, 1985. Bill C-31 contains three central components; the removal of language that discriminates based on gender, the ability for some to regain their status, and the rights for bands to create their own membership rules (Lawrence, 2004). These changes allowed approximately 127,000 individuals to regain their Indian status another 106,000 had their claims denied. This amendment has created a division between band membership and legal status. Furthermore, the amendment maintains a second generation cutoff for the passing of status (Lawrence, 2004). Thus, the *Indian Act* remains a complicated and contested piece of legislation.

separate tract are not of the value of at least one hundred and fifty dollars, and who is not otherwise possessed of the qualifications entitling him to be registered on the list of voters under this Act. (as cited in Moss, et al., 1991, para 13, my emphasis)

Granting franchise to the Indian population was seen as a crucial step in the assimilation process. Through franchise, Aboriginal men would become ‘full citizens’ of Canada and would surrender their distinctive Indian status (Miller, 2009). This, however, benefitted the Canadian government, and their assimilation project, more than the enfranchised Aboriginal peoples. Indeed, being granted franchise meant giving up one’s legal Aboriginal status, and thus access to land and connections on reserves. It was not until 1960 that all Aboriginals were given access to vote in federal elections without having to relinquish their status (Milloy, 1999). The systematic exclusion of Aboriginal peoples from civil society was a purposeful attempt to achieve assimilation while simultaneously limiting the political involvement of Indigenous people thus maintaining the status quo.

The twentieth century saw continued efforts towards assimilation particularly in the years following WWII. The 1947 *Canadian Citizenship Act* created a new federal ministry – the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (DCI) (Bohaker & Iacovetta, 2009). The DCI was charged with the responsibility of making ‘Canadians’ out of the immigrant population. In 1950 Liberal Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent moved the Department of Indian Affairs under DCI control. According to St-Laurent, this move was motivated by the need “to make Canadian citizens of those who came to here as immigrants and to make Canadian citizens of as many as possible of the descendants of the original inhabitants of this country” (as quoted by Cole, 1949 and cited in Bohaker & Iacovetta, 2009). The DCI denied its goal was to force the assimilation of new Canadians and Aboriginals. Department programs and literature, however, suggest otherwise. For example, the *Indian News* which was distributed free to Aboriginal homes from

1954 promoted the ideals of capitalism, individualism, literacy and traditional European based gender roles (Bohaker & Iacovetta, 2009). The policies of the Canadian government systematically denied access to most forms of power that would allow Aboriginal peoples to engage in political and social action to resist the assimilative project. Accompanying the formal efforts of the Canadian government Aboriginals have also encountered severe racism during much of the twentieth century. Racist attitudes and ignorance regarding the ongoing impact of colonialism pervaded throughout Canadian society, and are still present today (Godlewska, et al., 2010). Based upon the premise of racial inferiority, Aboriginals have been systematically denied participation in the social, economic and political system in which they were to assimilate. Furthermore, such faulty notions perpetuate the paternalistic rule, positioned as a ‘benevolent’ necessity, of Aboriginal individuals and communities by the Imperial and Canadian governments (Rice & Snyder, 2008).

This brief synopsis shows how Indian policy in the years following the War of 1812 has created a social, economic and political context of systemic discrimination against the Aboriginal population. Through the discussion of these policies we are able to see the shifting tides in attitudes towards the Aboriginal population once the threat of French and American invasion had subsided. Understanding these policies also provides important insight into both the motivation for, and structure, of the IRS system as a specific tool for assimilation.

### *iii. Education in Canada and the Indian Residential School System*

The responsibility of education in early colonial Canada lay at the local level. Parents were responsible for educating their children and preparing them to become productive members of society. Where possible, communities came together to create a local school that employed one teacher who often had limited or no teaching qualifications (Fiorino, 1978). The 1840s,

however, saw a movement towards universal public education motivated by “a confluence of social, economic, intellectual and religious forces which during this same period were rapidly transforming the existing social order” (Fiorino, 1978, p.2). The *Common School Act* of 1843 was the first in a series of acts that would culminate in a system of universal education in Upper Canada (Wilson, 1970). Designated as ‘the Founder of the School System in Ontario’ Egerton Ryerson is of particular importance to the development of both public education and the IRS. Ryerson (1847) campaigned for a universal education system arguing “[e]ducation is a public good, ignorance is a public evil” (as cited in Wilson, 1970, p. 217). He argued that every child rich or poor required an education in order to overcome “the evils of want and poverty” and to “fit him to be an honest and useful member of the community” (Ryerson, 1847 as cited in Wilson, 1970, p. 217).

While Ryerson advocated for a free public and compulsory education system he did not envision this system as integrated. As such we see the development of a number of different educational institutions. Provincially, “public schools of a special nature” were developed to accompany the ‘public’ school for white youth (Wilson, 1970, p. 231). These were segregated schools of three types; the Catholic or denominational school, the linguistic –French- based school, and the racial school (Wilson, 1970). By 1871, *The School Act* made school attendance mandatory for children aged seven through twelve for four months of the year (Fiorino, 1978). *The School Act* also ensured free admission for students as the system was now supported through property taxes (Fiorino, 1978). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the act made provisions for a strong central authority which would control curriculum, teacher training and textbook approval (Fiorino, 1978).

The movement towards a system of government funded education for youth in the provinces ran parallel to efforts of the Federal Government regarding the education Aboriginal youth. The Imperial government and missionaries recognized the importance of education to the successful assimilation (Milloy, 1999). Although there is a clear link between the government position on the Aboriginal population and the idea of an education system which would aid in the ‘civilization project,’ the development of the form of the IRS system is somewhat more ambiguous. Aboriginal education during early British rule was largely based on a ‘day-school’ model. However, from the 1840s onwards the residential school model became increasingly popular (Prochner, 2009).

Both the benefit and downfall of the residential school lay in its fundamental tenet of segregation. The IRS system required that students reside at the school on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. The term permanent or semi-permanent basis is used here because there were several residential schools which originally planned for a two month summer ‘holiday.’ During this time students would be allowed to return to their homes and spend time in their communities. For many students, however, the feasibility of such a holiday was unlikely as the residential school was purposefully located at a distance from reserves, therefore making it expensive and difficult for students to make the journey home (Milloy, 1999). Furthermore, as the IRS system developed administrators, politicians and educators viewed these trips home as increasing the likelihood of cultural ‘retrogression’ or backsliding. As such, over time student participation in these summer visits was made more and more difficult (Milloy, 1999). The irony, however, lay in the fact that the residential school, through its segregation, prevented Aboriginal children from interacting with not only their own communities, but also with the very culture that sought to assimilate them.



Most commentators see the IRS system as a failure. While the reasons for this are numerous, I shall discuss three in detail here; curriculum, finances and organization. The majority of Canadian residential schools worked in a half-day schedule wherein students would spend half their day learning the academic curriculum and the other half developing their skills in a more practical fashion. For example, boys learned agriculture and girls practiced domestic arts (de Leeuw, 2007). The labour provided by students within the IRS system was necessary for many of the schools to function as their agricultural, cooking and sewing skills provided a number of services essential for running the schools (de Leeuw, 2007). This half-day model, however, often proved to be the ideal rather than the lived experience. Former students have recalled that their time in the classroom was limited; at times they were even removed from the classroom in order to complete tasks around the school (Miller, 1996). In one extreme case, a pupil at Pelican Lake Residential School in Sioux Lookout has reported that they did not attend class for six of the eight years they attended the school (Miller, 1996).

The academic curriculum of the IRS was to include the following subjects; ‘General Knowledge’, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Ethics, Reading, Recitation, Vocal Music, Calisthenics, and Religious Instruction (DIA, 1897 as cited in Miller, 1996). These subjects were identified by the DIA as those that would “develop all the abilities, [and] remove prejudice against labour, and give courage to compete with the rest of the world” to Aboriginal youth (DIA, 1895, xxii as cited in Miller, 1996, p. 155). While the aims of the curriculum were clear administrators and teachers applied it inconsistently. Students across the country were taught with various textbooks and taught by teachers with varying degrees of education, training, skill and empathy. Furthermore, depending on the school, students also experienced varying levels of proselytizing zeal (Milloy, 1999). The one consistency of IRS curriculum lay in its

insistence on religious conversion, moral redemption and civilizing agenda. Official attempts to make IRS curriculum mandates clearer and more consistent began in 1920. The DIA mandated that schools were to abide by the curricular content of the province in which their school resided (Miller, 1996). Emphasis was still to be placed upon language, reading, domestic science, manual labour and agriculture leading to little opportunity to alter the half day model (Miller, 1996).

The residential school system, throughout its existence, was chronically underfunded. The schools received significantly less support than their provincial counterparts despite their higher operating costs (Axelrod, 1997; Miller, 1996 and Milloy, 1999). The Federal Government provided funding based on a per-student basis up to an authorized student maximum and while ecclesiastical officials lobbied – and at times succeeded – for increased funding, schools were often running at a deficit (Milloy, 1999). The combination of the poorly planned growth of the system and inadequate funding led to rapid deterioration of many of the buildings. This lack of building maintenance, unhygienic conditions coupled with ventilation problems in many schools - particularly in the prairies, and overcrowding created a tuberculosis epidemic across the system (Milloy, 1999). Indeed, a scathing report was issued in 1922 by Dr. P.H. Bryce and published by the Ontario Provincial Tuberculosis Commission titled *The Story of a National Crime being an appeal for Justice of the Indians in Canada* (Milloy, 1999). In his report Bryce charged the DIA with ignoring his 1907 report in which he had highlighted how the appalling conditions of many residential schools had resulted in the rapid spread of tuberculosis amongst the students (Milloy, 2009). Based on estimates provided by Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent of the DIA, “fifty percent of the children who passed through these schools did not live to benefit from the education which they had received therein” (D.C. Scott, 1913, p. 615

as quoted in Milloy, 1999, p. 51). Financial problems also had a pervasive practical effect on students as their manual training in the areas of domestic science, sewing and agriculture were often used to fill the financial gaps and to help the school be self-sufficient (Milloy, 1999). Furthermore, because of the tenuous financial circumstances many schools found themselves forced to hire unqualified teachers. It was not until the 1954 that the remuneration of residential school teachers was at a level comensurate to teachers in the provincial systems across Canada (Milloy, 1999). Three years later the number of qualified teachers in the IRS system had increased by fifty percent and by 1962 the DIA had reported that approximately ninety-percent of its teachers had achieved their qualifications (Milloy, 1999).

Dismantling the IRS system proved to be extremely difficult. Beginning in the 1950s students from residential schools were slowly integrated into other educational institutions. Despite efforts to integrate Aboriginal students into public schools, there were still a significant number of students attending residential schools and/or living in hostels in the 1960s (Milloy, 1999).<sup>19</sup> However, the Federal Government still deemed the Aboriginal population as wards of the state. As such, students often remained in the buildings of former residential schools whose employees and volunteers now become their guardians instead of their teachers (Milloy, 1999). Aboriginal students continued to struggle academically and socially in public school settings after integration (Miller, 1996).<sup>20</sup> Miller (1996) has argued that one of the great ironies of colonial education is its production of Aboriginal political activists and defenders of traditional culture. While one of the aims of the IRS system was to produce docile citizens willing to accept

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<sup>19</sup> The number of residential schools and hostels still in operation in 1969 was disproportionate to the number of students enrolled in public school. In 1948 sixty percent of Aboriginal students attended a residential school, by 1969 this same percentage attended a public school (Milloy, 1999). Despite this only twenty residential schools had closed during that twenty-one year period (Milloy, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> It is not until the 1950s that the development of any sort of culturally sensitive curriculum can be seen; including increasing recognition and use of Aboriginal languages and teaching of English as a second language (Stamp, 1970).

the political, economical, social and cultural discrimination they would face in Canadian society the opposite transpired. Several students, such as Phil Fontaine, Andrew Paull, John Tootoosis and Matthew Coon Come, utilized the skills they gained from colonial education to create and/or contribute to Aboriginal political organizations that have contributed to recent efforts at reconciliation and accountability (Miller, 1996).

*iv. Contemporary circumstances*

In 1991 the Canadian government established the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP). This commission was given a broad mandate by the Canadian Parliament which declared it should,

The Commission of Inquiry should investigate the evolution of the relationship among Aboriginal peoples (Indian, Inuit and Metis), the Canadian government, and Canadian society as a whole. It should propose specific solutions, rooted in domestic and international experience, to the problems which have plagued those relationships and which confront Aboriginal peoples today. (RCAP, 1996a, section 1)

In 1996 the Commission published a 4000 page report which outlined the history of Canadian and Aboriginal relations making hundreds of recommendations (RCAP, 1996b). One of the suggestions stemming from the RCAP report was an extensive public inquiry into the residential school system (RCAP, 1996a). The RCAP recommendation proposed an in-depth examination of the origins, purposes and effects of the IRS system in Canada (RCAP, 1996a). The RCAP report deals with much more than just the residential schools, including treaty rights and constitutional issues, but in all areas of discussion it is consistent in its call for a restructuring of the relationship between Aboriginal groups and the Canadian government (RCAP, 1996b).

In the context of the IRS system, government attempts at healing this relationship began in 1997 with the Federal Government's *Statement of Reconciliation* and the IRSSA. The statement included an acknowledgement of, and apology for, instances of sexual and physical

abuse within residential schools (Castellano, Archibald, & DeGagne, 2008). Furthermore, the statement created an institution to support community healing, the AHF. The IRSSA was implemented in fall 2007. The IRSSA provides a cash payment to survivors, or their estates, of the residential schools as well as providing “an individual assessment process for adjudication of cases of more serious abuse” (Castellano, et al., 2008, p.3). However, ongoing litigation involving former students, the government, and the churches that ran the schools was proving costly (Castellano, et al., 2008). While the exact number of residential schools that operated in Canada is unknown, 141 – as of August 2011 have been identified for the purposes of the IRSSA (AHF, nd, b).<sup>21</sup> Figure One shows a map of some of these locations, notably the ones discussed here. The IRSSA also extended funding for the initiatives of the AHF as well as establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The mandate of the TRC is consistent with many of the recommendations outlined in the RCAP report (Castellano, et al., 2008).

The contemporary context of Canadian-Aboriginal associations is both a relationship of conflict and tension, as well as, one of change and efforts towards reconciliation. It is only in recent years that the Canadian government has recognized, in any meaningful manner, the damage caused to Aboriginal families and communities through the drive towards assimilation. The contextual information discussed here highlights how the IRS system developed as a result of the intersection of several people, institutions, cultures and beliefs since the arrival of European explorers and settlers to North America. The IRS system was predicated on the belief that the white French, and British settlers entering Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth century were intellectually, socially, morally and economically superior. Furthermore, that the total assimilation of all Aboriginal people was both preferable and essential to the success of

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<sup>21</sup> Initially 139 schools were identified within the *Settlement Agreement*, however, in August 2011 Stirland Lake and Cristal Lake schools were recognized by the IRSSA. These schools represent the first new additions to the compensation agreement since its implementation (Harris, 2011).

Canada. What resulted was an exceptionally violent approach to assimilation which sought to completely eradicate Aboriginal ways of life. Though Canadians often consider our history with Aboriginals as mostly peaceful and benevolent, the truth is that it is anything but that (Regan, 2010). Understanding the broader social and political context in which the IRS was situated we are able to understand how the residential school was a material site created with the purpose of disseminating colonial discourses about Aboriginals to Aboriginal youth. In the following chapter I explore the disciplinary tactics used in residential school to support this purpose. I demonstrate how these disciplinary techniques were used in attempts to control student's every moment and movement and repurpose them to serve the colonial project of assimilation.

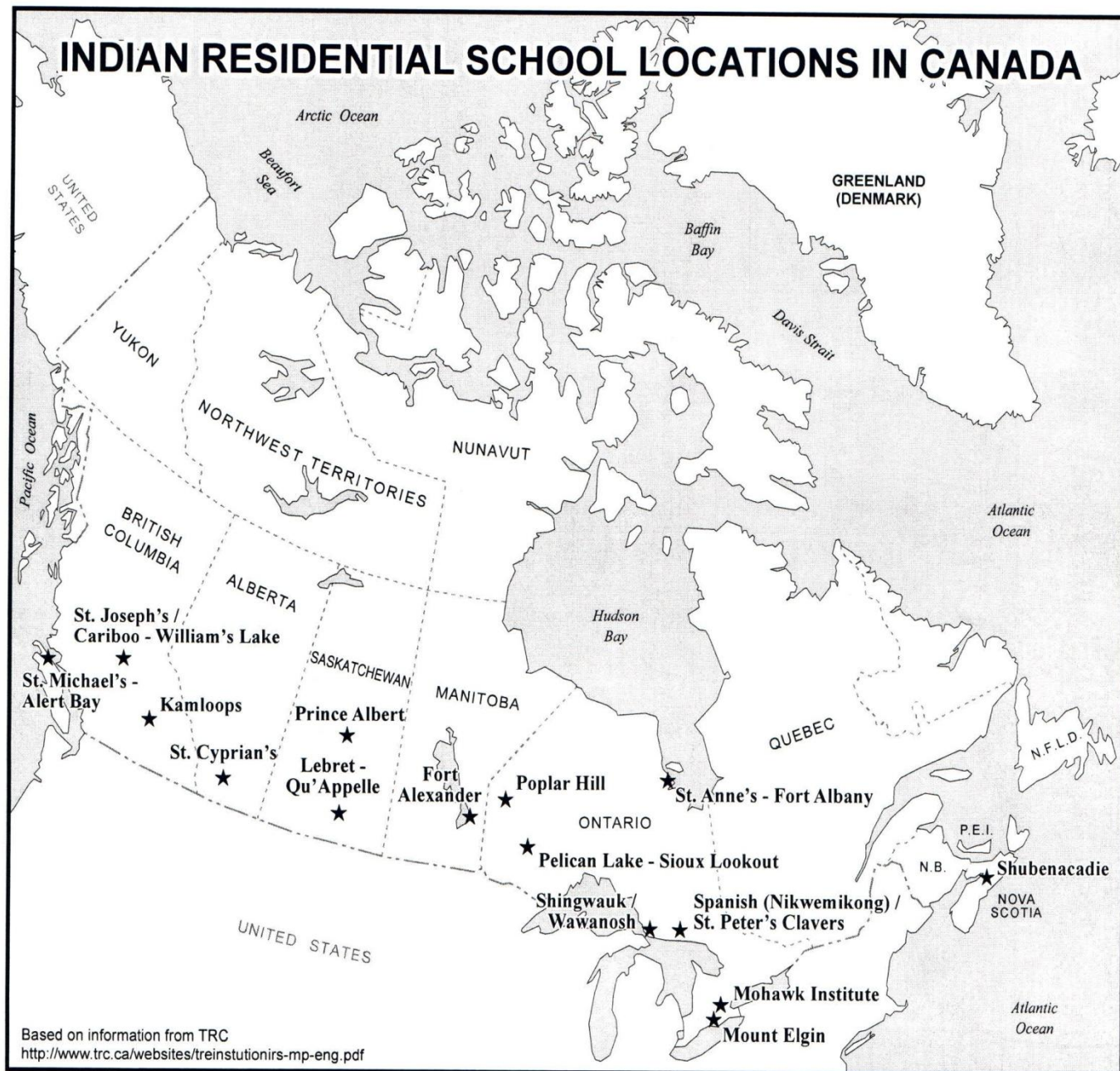


Figure One; Locations of Residential Schools

## **Chapter Five: Discipline in the Residential School**

Thus far I have made clear that the motivation of government officials for the IRS system was assimilation under the premise of ‘civilizing the Indian’ population. The residential school system, however, was a joint venture of church and state. While the government was responsible for the school system on the broader scale, church-state agreements put the administration of the schools at the intimate scale in the hands of various church officials. Church officials’ enthusiasm for the residential school project was fundamentally missionary in nature.

Recruitment pamphlets, such as the one pictured in figure two, position the proselytizing efforts of the Anglican Church as a necessary component of the broader civilization project (Anglican Church, nd in Logan, 1994). Specifically, the pamphlet outlines their objective “To Change the Outlook of the Native Child” resulting in a graduate well versed in Christian teachings who were then “worthy Canadian citizens” (Anglican Church, nd, p 2, in Logan, 1994). For both church and state officials the goals of conversion and assimilation was understood to be grounded in successful discipline of the Aboriginal child.

This chapter discusses how teachers and administrators used disciplinary tactics in the residential school system. The chapter addresses two of my research questions. First, I asked how the administration of the IRS sought to transform Aboriginal students? In addressing this question, I argue that both the material and symbolic spaces of the IRS were central to the goals of transforming, civilizing and disciplining the Aboriginal student. I use the term symbolic space to refer to the various symbols located in the residential school and through, or on, various mediums that served the disciplinary process. Secondly, I consider the relationship between residential school curriculum and pedagogy and student product. Here, I argue that the disciplinary goals of the IRS curriculum are linked with student products. When used here, the



term student product refers to the outcome of educational and curricular work. This, then, can include work produced by students in class, but also to their adherence to institution rules and overall behaviour. In this chapter I utilize the concepts of overt, hidden and null curriculums as throughout my discussion. I investigate the goals of each of these as well as the disciplinary tactics teachers mobilized to achieve them.

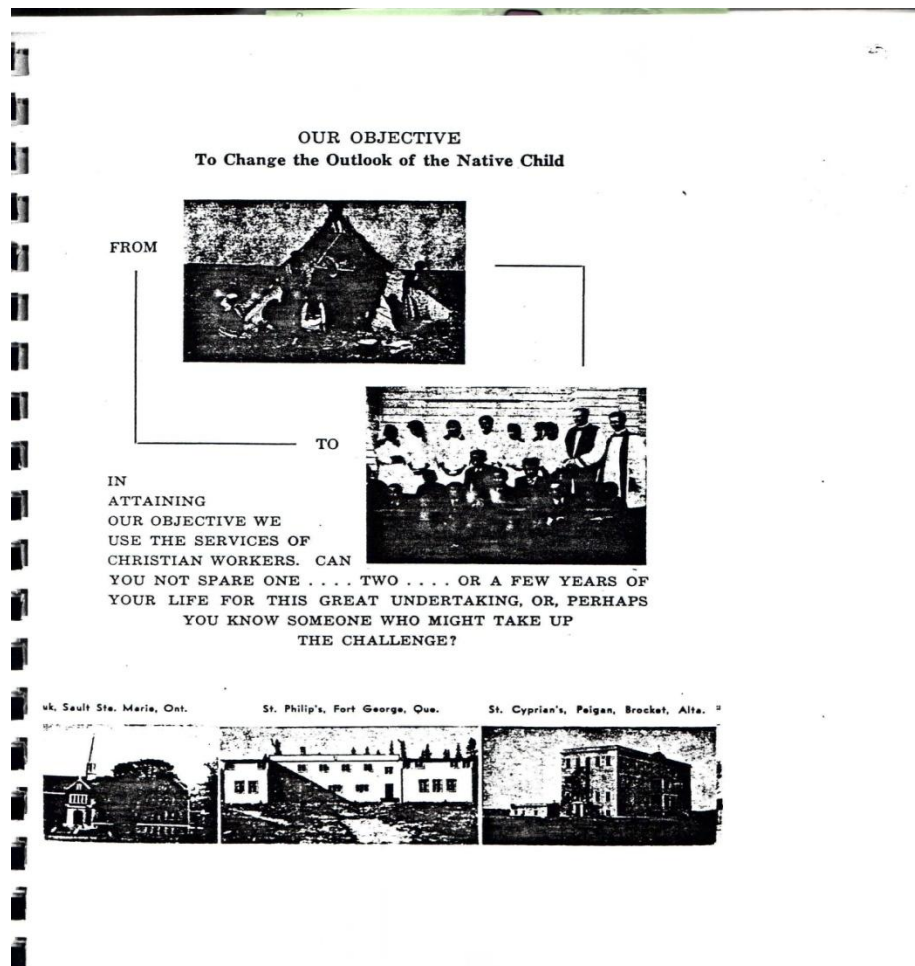


Figure Two; Anglican Recruitment Brochure (pg 3), source Logan (1994) at The Shingwauk Project (see appendix two for full brochure)

The chapter unfolds in the following manner. First I engage with the school as a disciplinary site. Second, I discuss the goals of the overt curriculum, or the prescribed learning goals and objectives of the residential school. Next, I consider the disciplinary tactics of the hidden curriculum, the by-products of the organization of physical space as well as the attitudes

of school officials. From here I engage the discipline of the null curriculum objectives, or *not* teaching certain skills, histories and traditions. These interrelated curriculums function with both the physical and symbolic spaces of the IRS to discipline students' towards the internalization of curricular discourses.

*i. The School as a Disciplinary Site*

The very purpose of education, and its central site, the school, is to transform its pupils. The nature of this transformation, and the principles and objectives which motivate it, varies across institutions. However, education is never an impartial process. Education functions largely as a tool “used to facilitate the integration of a younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it” (Shaull, preface to Freire, 1972, p. 15). Therefore, every component of the educational process, the subjects covered, the nature of delivery and the physical form of the building, play a role in transforming students into a product that school officials deem ‘fit’ for society. For the Indian Residential School, however, this was a more complicated endeavour as it required that education eradicate students’ Aboriginal identities before this conformity could be achieved. In this section I address how the school serves as a disciplinary site. More specifically, I address how the residential school operated as a physical manifestation of assimilation goals in colonial Canada.

The school is home to complicated networks of interactions between students, teachers, and administration. The networks of relations within residential school are, perhaps, more complex than secular schools as missionaries, priests and government officials were often intimately involved in the day to day goings on at the school. Power relations between these groups exacerbated already complex networks of exchanges. In other words, any individual and/or group in the IRS was embedded in multiple power relations, they both utilized and were

manipulated by power simultaneously. It is this complex network of power relations that allow for the school to operate simultaneously as a space for discipline and resistance. I shall, however, in this chapter focus on the disciplinary elements of the school.

The success of the school as a disciplinary site relies heavily on its ability to disseminate a particular set of discourses. The school, then, can be understood as a discursive site, a location through which particular discourses are distributed in an effort to achieve particular goals. Mills (1997, p. 66) argues “[d]iscourse itself structures what statements it is possible to say, and the conditions under which certain statements will be considered true and appropriate” thus creating a circumstance where specific utterances are privileged and normalized as ‘Truths.’ The material composition of the discursive site serves to aid in the normalization, and internalization, of networks of meaning that reinforce particular relations. Cultural production facilitates the reproduction of accepted cultural and social norms and is passed through the discursive site.

Many Aboriginal parents, at least initially, believed that a formal education would be necessary for their children to survive in the increasingly white world (Miller, 2000). Parents, however, did not agree to allow schools to eradicate their language and traditions through education. As such, conflicts arose between parents and communities and school officials and Indian agents. Part of the success of the residential school as a discursive and disciplinary site relied on its isolation. Isolation was manifest in the organization of both physical and emotional space. Officials built schools increasingly further from reserves (Miller, 1996). This meant that many students were well-removed from their homes. The Shingwauk Project’s student testimonials reflect this trend. A former student, Claire, recalls that along with her siblings she was moved from Mattagami First Nation, approximately 70 kilometres south of Timmons in Northeastern Ontario, to Sault Ste. Marie, approximately 315 kilometers away, to attend

Shingwauk in the 1920s (Shingwauk Memories, nd). The relocation of Aboriginal youth was, according to Shingwauk principal E.F. Wilson, not meant to “un-Indianize them” rather it was to “for their own good, induce them to lay aside the bow and fish-spear and put their hand to the plough...” (in Johnston, 1988, p. 7). This segregation was clearly a disciplinary technique. The removal of students from their parents and communities prevented the communication of Aboriginal culture from elder to young person difficult, if not impossible. Symbolically, the relocation of Aboriginal youth was meant to motivate a fundamental alteration of how Aboriginal peoples would interact with space. The relocation of students created an intentional schism in Aboriginal communities with the purpose of alienating youth from their parents, communities and culture and of normalizing the ‘superiority’ of a sedentary lifestyle. All of this was intended to prevent cultural ‘retrogression’ or ‘backsliding.’

The physical form of the residential school building was also integral to the disciplinary process. The material structure communicates to students a particular set of discourses and attempts, through its pervasiveness, to normalize them. Its effectiveness can be seen through statements of former students such as Basil Johnston (1988, p. 6), who attended Spanish Residential School,

Though we didn’t know for certain what Spanish represented, our fear of it was not without foundation. Many of our parents had gone to the institution – or one like it...Spanish! It was a word synonymous with residential school, penitentiary, reformatory, exile, dungeon, whipping, kicks, slaps all rolled in to one.

Statements such as Johnston’s are a common refrain among former IRS students. It is clear that residential school developers and administrators made intentional efforts to produce a powerful aura. Figure three shows The Shingwauk Home in Sault Ste. Marie in 1935. Its imposing architecture was a far cry from the traditional places of learning for many Aboriginal students for

whom learning was primarily based in the home and community (Miller, 1996). Furthermore, its placement at the peak of a slight hill contributes to its authority as it dominates the view from St. Mary's River. This can be seen in figure four, a contemporary photo of the Shingwauk Home. Furthermore, the residential school, through its physical layout, sought to impose upon its' students a sense of constant surveillance and therefore docility. The positioning of students in classrooms as well as their access to other areas of the school ensured that they "were always within the monitoring and colonial gaze of school staffs" (de Leeuw, 2009, p. 345). Former students have remarked about being confined both in space and time by a strict schedule whereby "[b]ells marked the course of the day, telling the children *where* they should be and *what* they should be doing at each moment" (Graham, 1997, p. 40, my emphasis). The spaces of the IRS allowed school staffs were able to monitor student behaviour constantly. This constant surveillance was a necessary component to the subsequent classification of students through a process of judgment.

Student's daily lives were impacted by the physical layout of the school building as well.

Figure five shows a classroom at Shingwauk – its sterile and ordered form was utilized to

Figure three: Shingwauk IRS 1935, (source The Shingwauk Project Archives, Anglican Church of Canada fonds)



Figure four: Shingwauk IRS now home to Algoma University and Shingwauk University, (photo by author Aug 2010)



reinforce Victorian ideas regarding the proper distribution of objects and students' bodies in space (Milloy, 1999). They were to sit straight and still without physical contact with their neighbours. The placement of the teacher at the front of the classroom with all the student's desks facing the board communicates who is in control. This organization is intended to privilege the messages and content being delivered by the instructor. Simultaneously this organization aids in the silencing and marginalization of student's voices. The desk formation is optimal for teacher surveillance, making it easier to identify and reprimand students not behaving according to plan.

Figure six, a photo of the dormitories at Shingwauk, shows how student's living quarters were also used in the disciplinary process by forcing students to utilize space in a specific manner consistent with their peers. Staff enforced compliance through constant surveillance. Students were anonymized as they were not allowed to have personal effects near their beds and in their living quarters. This served to strip them of their individuality in order to reform their identities. Every space in the IRS was part of the education of Aboriginal students. The structure of the classroom and the dorm were purposefully organized to communicate a pedagogical philosophy of transformation through constant disciplinary pressure.



Figure five: Classroom at Shingwauk IRS, no date, (The Shingwauk Project Archives, Anglican Church of Canada fonds)

It is clear that the architectural design of the residential school was designed in such a way that it dictated how students would use the space (de Leeuw, 2007). Indeed, the physical layout with its focus on conformity and surveillance served to prevent expressions of individuality. Through its material composition limitations were placed on how students were able to behave in space. European understandings of comportment and the ‘proper’ arrangement of and use of objects in space were presented as the only options in the IRS context.

Within the IRS students’ bodies were also manipulated to reflect and aid in the ‘civilization’ efforts of colonial education. IRS curriculum was often aimed at students’ bodies, their hygiene, comportment, and appearance. Several former students and scholars have discussed the attempts made to manipulate students’ bodies as reflections of colonial agendas (see Haig-Brown, 1991; Milloy, 1999). It was important to IRS staff that students reflected well upon their efforts. Thus, students’ bodies became representative products of the success, or failure, of IRS curriculum. Upon arrival students were often bathed with disinfectant, inspected and changed into ‘appropriate,’ Euro-Canadian style, clothing (Haig-Brown, 1991; Milloy, 1999; and Fontaine, 2010). Students have also recalled having their hair cut upon arrival. The cutting

of student's hair is a culturally specific form of trauma that often deeply upset them. One former student recalls, "[t]hey went to work and cut off my braids, which according to Assiniboine custom, was a token of mourning – the closer the relative, the closer the cut. After my haircut, I wondered in silence if my mother had died, as they had cut my hair so close to the scalp" (Greyeyes, 1997, p. 10). This process of 'cleansing' IRS students was intended to strip them of their 'Indian' nature (Greyeyes, 1997; Milloy, 1999). This physical manipulation of students' bodies ensured that students were examined and stripped of their individuality immediately upon arrival to the IRS system.



Figure six: The dorms at Shingwauk IRS 1935, (The Shingwauk Project Archives, Anglican Church of Canada fonds)

Student's bodies, then, became locations for discipline. The theme of physical abuse is common in the testimonials of former students. School officials used corporeal punishment on student who broke, or were suspected of breaking, rules. The effectiveness of punishments aimed at the body were exacerbated because it was often a public ordeal and humiliating. Sophie, a student at Kamloops, remembers that students were publically beaten, "if we got caught, we got really punished and if that didn't work, we got sent to the principal's office. And that was lashes we got there, in front of the whole school: real humiliation" (interviewed in Haig-Brown,



1991, p. 83). Depending on the infraction some students were made to wear their punishment long term. As punishment for running away Alice had her “hair cut for punishment. So my hair was cut really short, almost like a boy’s” (interviewed in Haig-Brown, 1991, p. 84). The public nature of students’ punishments was also a form of normalizing judgment. Through the utilization of such techniques for punishments students became embodied representations of the colonial project and the real consequences of failure or refusal to comply.

It is through a consideration of the school as disciplinary and discursive site that we can see that IRS staff believed that students’ bodies were the key to cultural change and how much of the disciplinary efforts of the IRS were aimed at the body. Students at residential schools adhered to a strict schedule with little free time, Kelly (2008, p. 16) recalls being “confined to the school grounds” and having their time “regulated by a regimented schedule.” The materiality of the colonial experience was emphasized by the physical separation of siblings upon their arrival to the school into separate gendered dormitories and often separate classes. One former student at Shingwauk remarked “[w]e went as families but we didn’t stay together. We were split into age groups and didn’t see our sisters and brothers that much except in winter out at the skating rink” (Shingwauk Memories, nd). Thus, disciplinary practices in the IRS were inherently spatial as segregation from siblings and those of the opposite gender were viewed as integral to the ‘civilization’ efforts. Foucault (1995) argued that through such constant coercion of the body disciplinary techniques create docile subjects. We can see such attempts through the ordering of time and the body in residential school space.

## *ii. Disciplining through the Overt Curriculum*

The overt curricular goals, or the academic context, of the residential school system aimed at teaching Aboriginal students skills that would enable their participation in the modern

economy. The academic content attempted, but often did not succeed, in providing the specific skills needed for the economic assimilation of Aboriginal students upon graduation. The initial IRS curriculum presented many of the same subjects taught in provincial schools at the time. In the IRS these were presented in six standards in either English or French. There was, however, great variances across the system in terms of *how* this curriculum content was delivered. Differences in funding, resource restrictions as well as religious convictions caused significant differences in the academic experiences of residential school students (Miller, 1996). Until the early twentieth century the only consistency in IRS education was its intention to morally ‘redeem’ its Aboriginal students (Miller, 1996).

This redemption, it was believed, would come through religious conversion. Children were educated in the religious dogma, traditions and rituals of the church order that ran the school they attended. In most, if not all, residential schools religious instruction permeated every aspect of students’ lives, from the chapel to the dorm and the classroom to the field. That students should feel pressure to adhere to Christian values in all aspects of their lives was established early in IRS history. The future Ontario School Superintendent, the Reverend Egerton Ryerson wrote in 1847 “nothing can be done to improve and elevate his [Indian] character and condition without the aid of religious feeling” (as cited in Miller, 1996, p. 83). This ‘feeling’ was intended to be inescapable within the confines of the residential school campus. We can see this in the daily routines observed in residential schools such as Qu’Appelle Residential School;

5:30 Rise  
6:00 Chapel  
6:30-7:15 Bed making, milking, and pumping  
7:15-7:30 Inspection to see if children are clean and well  
7:30 Breakfast  
7:30-8:00 Fatigue [chores] for small boys

8:00 Trade boys at work  
9:00-12:00 School, with a 15 minute recess  
12:00-12:40 Dinner  
12:40-2:00 Recreation  
2:00-4:00 School and trades for older pupils  
4:45- 6:00 Fatigues, sweeping, mopping, pumping and so forth  
6:00-6:10 Prepare for supper  
6:10-6:40 Supper  
6:40-8:00 Recreation  
8:00 Prayer and retire (Milloy, 1999, p. 137)

Though not all of these tasks are explicitly religious in nature Christian ideals about hygiene, industriousness and order are present throughout. ‘Codes of discipline’ governed how students performed every activity (Milloy, 1999). This strict scheduling of student bodies in space and time was, fundamentally, about transforming students into Christian beings. One student recalls how the priest at Kamloops residential school attempted to “hammer into our heads...that we would go to hell and burn for eternity if we did not listen to their way of teaching” (Milloy, 1999, p. 138). The constant barrage of discipline through routine, activity and punishment then discouraged not only acting like an ‘Indian’ but also any individualism or unique thought.

In 1920 the DIA made an attempt to provide a more consistent academic experience by mandating that residential schools follow the curriculum of the province in which they were located (Miller, 1996). The focus of instruction, however, remained on teaching Aboriginal youth vocational skills rather than academic knowledge, a trend that would continue in many schools until the 1950s. This focus on vocational skills materialized as the half day system. Students would spend half of their day in the academic classroom and half of their day learning ‘practical skills’ such as carpentry and agriculture for boys and sewing and cooking for girls (Milloy, 1999; Johnston, 1988). Students such as Theodore Fontaine (2010), recall that their half

day allocation to chores and vocational training was often extended and kept them from the classroom. Johnston (1988, p. 27-8) similarly recalls the focus on vocational training,

St. Peter Claver's existed for two reasons. One was to train Indian youth for some vocation: tailoring, milling, blacksmithing, shoemaking, tinsmithing, painting, carpentry, backing, cooking, plumbing, welding, gardening, sheep and swine herding, animal husbandry and poultry care...The school's other purpose was to foster religious vocations by frequent prayer and adoration...The school produced neither tradesmen nor priests.

According to government officials the removal of Aboriginal students from the academic classroom was necessary to their future; "The need of the Indian pupil for this form [vocational] of instruction is even greater than that of the white pupil" (in Miller, 1996, p. 158). Such statements highlight how through the overt curriculum, teachers disciplines Aboriginal students to believe that their futures lay in within the vocational realm rather than the academic.

Despite its intentions, however, the material/nature of the overt curriculum subjects was, pedagogically speaking, problematic. Outwardly, the material of the overt curriculum had goals of 'raising up the Aboriginal youth to the academic, cultural, and religious level, of their white peers. As E.F. Wilson (1890, p. 6) wrote, "[e]ducation is to be the medium through which the rising generation of Indians is to be brought into harmonious relationship with their white fellow citizens" (in Wall, 2003, p. 18). However, in the IRS Aboriginal students were doubly disadvantaged because of the nature of instruction delivery and the language. Because one of the primary institutional goals of the IRS was to produce English speaking graduates, the primary language of instruction was English. IRS teachers and administration largely failed to recognize how this negatively impacted the education of Aboriginal youth. Reaching firm conclusions about the level of academic success of students in the residential school system is difficult as the disorganized nature of the IRS system led to inconsistent reporting about student progress. A department investigation based on statistical analysis concluded that in 1945 there

were 9149 residential school students. Of these students there were “slightly over 100 students enrolled in above grade 8 and...there was no record of any students beyond the grade 9 level” (Davey, 1968 in Milloy, 1999, p. 171). Other research has suggested that between 1890 and 1950 close to sixty percent of students failed to progress pass the third grade curriculum (Milloy, 1999).

Students were also disadvantaged by the radical shift in learning environment (Miller, 1996, Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). Prior to Euro-Canadian schools education for Aboriginal children was experiential in nature and was largely informal; “That Aboriginal cultures cherished autonomy and expression was manifested in an ethos of learning described as the three L’s – looking, listening and learning” (Miller, 1996 as paraphrased in Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003, p. 40). Students, therefore, struggled to adapt to the strict, heavily structured learning environment of the residential school (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). As teachers and priests privileged European methods of education, student received a clear message, you must speak English, abide by European social norms and you must learn a trade to have any measure of success beyond the school.

The content of academic instruction also played a role in the construction and distribution of discourses about Aboriginal people. Former teachers have described the textbooks used in the IRS system as complimentary of Aboriginal heritage (Logan, 1994). Investigations into the social studies and history programmes of study in nineteenth and twentieth century curriculums, however, have concluded that most of the references to Aboriginal people was derogatory. Texts often described Aboriginal people as “childlike, brute beasts without faith,” and “more like hogs than men” (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003, p. 15). An excerpt from a textbook used in schools in the twentieth century includes a section titled “The Canadian Indians” which claims “in

Canada very few groups [of Indians] advanced beyond the stage of fishing and hunting, of stone weapons and tribal government” (in Logan, 1994).<sup>22</sup> However, I argue that texts such as these are highly problematic for several reasons. First, they deny the recognition of Aboriginal communities as nations with the right to self-determination by labeling them “Canadian Indians.” Second, such texts argue that there is a linear pattern of development for social groups from ‘savage’ to ‘civilized.’ This schema places a Western democratic government and capitalist economy as more advanced on the developmental continuum. This suggests that a life based upon tribal allegiances and subsistence hunting and fishing is inferior to the capitalist, white settler society. Such texts make visible Said’s (1979) claim that discourses are created and perpetuated in order to naturalize the ‘other’ as inferior. The teachers promotion of these damaging discourses to Aboriginal students was a disciplinary tactic aimed at demeaning Aboriginal youth’s ontological understandings of themselves, their heritage, and community.

Girls were, perhaps, triply disadvantaged in the IRS climate. The agreement between church and state officials meant that learning in the residential school was gendered in accordance with religious beliefs. This meant that female students were often taught domestic tasks to the exclusion of academic material or trade skills. For example, Methodist schools focused on tasks relating to the maintenance of home and family as “[s]uch an all-round training fits a girl to be mistress of her home very much better than if she spent her whole time in the class-room [*sic*]” (in Miller, 1996, p. 159). The education of Aboriginal girls served three purposes in the colonial project. First, it was hoped that it would prevent boys from backsliding. In arguing for a girl’s institution, Father Hugonnard of Lebreton wrote, “[e]ducating boys who would marry unschooled and unevangelized girls would ensure reversion to ‘heathen’ ways” (as

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<sup>22</sup> This excerpt is located in the appendices of Bernice Logan’s *The Teaching Wigwam*. Logan’s book is a self-published book on the IRS system. As a former teacher Logan was interested in making public her experiences. According to Logan, this text would have been used in instruction.

cited in Miller, 1996, p. 219). Simply put, girls required an education so that the progress of male graduates would not be lost upon marriage. Second, an IRS education promoted European standards regarding gendered division of labour which would encourage graduates to form the 'proper' nuclear family. European understandings of gender were deeply embedded in social norms of the time. As such these norms were carried through to the IRS context and often fanatically enforced. The gendered division of students occurred not only in the dormitory but also in the playground, the lunchroom, and even the classroom (Miller, 1996). Residential school instruction aligned with European understandings of what skills were suitable and necessary for male and female students upon graduation. Lastly, it dictated the specific spaces where the presence of women was deemed appropriate. Female students were often assigned tasks that were performed indoors, such as cleaning, sewing and cooking. But the division entered the recreational times of students as well. For example, at the Albany school on James Bay male students had up to four outdoor activities a day where as girls were limited to one (Miller, 1996). These sharply drawn gender divisions then placed the female students in the private sphere, a location which, according to social norms of the period, was the appropriate place for a woman.

### *iii. Disciplining through the Hidden Curriculum*

If I can provide a visual image to assist in understanding the relationship between the overt and hidden curriculum it would be an iceberg. The overt curriculum, that which can be seen with ease can be compared to the portion of the iceberg above water. The hidden curriculum, an indirect but significant portion of curricular goals, is hidden beneath the surface. One, however, cannot exist without the other. As such, one cannot consider the material of overt curriculum without considering the nature of its delivery and hidden intentions. The intentions

of the hidden curriculum may be stated, or not, and are, therefore, more complex than that of the overt curriculum. In this section I focus on the behaviour and attitudes of school staff and how this affected the organization of school and classroom space in an effort to achieve particular goals. I argue that in the context of the IRS the hidden curriculum was a damaging assimilative tool.

Choreographing the use of space in a classroom is a pedagogically important practice. How a teacher organizes the space of their classroom enables or constrains certain student behaviours. Hirst and Cooper (2008) argue that the organization of students and teachers in classroom, and school, spaces creates the opportunity for the construction of people through ‘pedagogical dances’ in educational space. In the IRS classroom teachers’ attitudes dictated that a strict and constant monitoring of students and a methodical control of their bodies was crucial. When discussing his experience at Spanish Residential School, Basil Johnston (1988, p. 67) recalls, “[t]he Jesuits could regulate the day and the week with precision and guarantee that what had been planned and scheduled would come to pass as planned and scheduled.” The strict control of student bodies in time and space reflected the belief Aboriginal youth were wild. Thus, they required the constant pressure of a firm hand in order to facilitate their transformation to a state of civilization.

On the surface the placement of students in gendered dormitories was presented as an attempt to prevent sexual misconduct between students. This segregation also communicates an insidious set of messages to students. First, such divisions suggested that students lacked self-control and could not be trusted unsupervised around members of the opposite sex. Furthermore, the arrangement privileges European gender norms above the familial bond of students. Punishment for students interacting with a member of the opposite sex was often harsh. A



former student of the Catholic institution at Williams Lake who spoke at an open RCAP hearing recalls “I was whipped for talking to my brother. He was my brother, for God’s sake” (as quoted in Miller, 1996, p. 219).

The intricate connection between the overt and hidden curriculums of the residential school can also be seen when considering the focus on vocational training of students. As mentioned administrators promotion of student labour was motivated by more than desire to provide students with the necessary skills to achieve employment in a trade after graduation, the labour provided by students was also necessary to keep the schools in operation. Students often completed the farm work that would enable food to reach the tables of the dining hall and their sewing classes were spent creating clothes for students of the school (Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999). The focus on vocational training, however, also contributed to what Miller (1996) has described as the ‘Buckskin ceiling.’ Their training served to set limitations on student success beyond the IRS. The IRS focused on vocational education, and Miller (1996) suggests often the less-skilled trades, in an effort to prepare students for limited success they could anticipate after graduation. Administrators thought that because their potential was limited, providing children with practical training was doing them a favour as “[t]o educate children above the possibilities of their station, and create a distaste for what is certain to be their environment in life would be not only a waste of money but doing them an injury instead of conferring a benefit upon them” (in Miller, 1996, p. 158). This ‘station’ however, was a constructed social and economic “reality” created by colonial officials and the wider society of which they were to be a part.

The teaching and normalization of discourses around the uncivilized and savage nature of Aboriginal culture through explicit instruction served a number of ‘hidden’ purposes. First, such discourses aimed at replacing the ontological understandings of Aboriginal youth. Second, both

the style and content of residential school education presented the sedentary life as superior to the nomadic. Success, then, was framed in a way that discounted a life of nomadic gathering, hunting, trapping or fishing for sustenance. This of course, meant that the hidden curriculum presented students families and communities as inferior and irredeemable. From the earliest stages of the IRS government officials argued that Aboriginal parents were beyond saving. This message was passed along to students through curricular content and reinforced by the hidden curriculum. Students were taught that their communities were places of poverty and ignorance and their families were deficient in the important personal areas of hygiene and literacy (Johnston, 1988). Here, it is possible to see how the teaching of such discourses to Aboriginal children was also a method of legitimating the colonization of their land and the eradication of their language and culture.

Lastly, I consider the message communicated to students through the disrepair of school buildings and the poor quality of food (Johnston, 1988; Miller, 1996; Graham, 1997, Milloy, 1999). Issues around food and school structures provided cause for a significant number of complaints about the IRS system from students and their parents. Parents responded to their children's mistreatment by writing letters to their local Indian Agent and the DIA (Milloy, 1999). However, satisfactory action was rarely taken and so parents, at times, also resisted sending their children in to the system (Milloy, 1999). Johnston (1988) recalls that one of the most frequent complaints amongst students was about the quality and quantity of available food. Though, perhaps, not intentional, the issues around food and the disrepair of residential school buildings sent a powerful message to students, parents and Aboriginal communities. The lack of any system-wide sense of organization coupled with issues of chronic underfunding show the low priority status of the IRS system to the Federal Government.

iv. *Disciplining through the Null Curriculum*

Disciplining through the null curriculum was just as important to achieving the goals of ‘civilizing’ Aboriginal youth. The null curriculum – that which is not taught, is as important a disciplinary technique as direct manipulations and the hidden agendas. School curriculum reflects what is deemed important knowledge in society. By choosing what to include and exclude in curriculum officials are simultaneously making statements about what is important and unimportant and what is to be understood as true and not true.

In the IRS context it was not enough to simply ignore Aboriginal traditions. Rather, in the residential school the teachers and administration undertook a policy of what I refer to as active nullification. Students arrived at the schools at various ages. As such, students were not ‘blank slates’ that could simply be inscribed with the desired colonial discourses. Rather, students came with individual experiences of Aboriginal language, traditions and family lives. Teachers needed to eradicate these before students could be remade with colonial understandings of civilization, time and space. Active nullification required that teachers consistently position that which is not taught as inferior. We can see this in their treatment of Aboriginal languages. As I have already argued the residential school system was created to facilitate a cultural break between Aboriginal students and their families and communities. The eradication of Aboriginal language was understood to be central to achieving this break. Depending on which school they attended students were expected to communicate in English or French at all times. To extinguish the Aboriginal student’s use of traditional languages, teachers took an approach of active nullification, what Miller (1996) has described as a pedagogy of prevention. The pedagogy of prevention was a system of rewards and punishments which prioritized the English and French languages, Victorian ideals and Christianity (Milloy, 1999). The experience, however, was

different for students who attended residential schools across different spaces and times. Some students recall severe, and often corporal, punishment if they spoke ‘Indian’ (see, for examples Haig-Brown, 1991, Milloy, 1999). Others, recall more subtle forms of persuasion regarding language. Through published testimonials of former students we see that teachers, administrators, priests, and nuns actively positioned traditional Aboriginal languages as inferior by not teaching or engaging them throughout a significant portion of the IRS system.

The null curriculum also played a role in discrediting Aboriginal traditions, history and religious beliefs. By presenting colonial versions of historical encounters as certain truths the IRS curriculum simultaneously denied Aboriginal historical and spiritual perspectives. The academic context of the IRS schools denied recognition of creation stories which suggested that Indigenous groups had longstanding and important connections to the land. The Ojibwa, for example, attributed supernatural abilities to many elements of the natural world (Ripmeester, 1995). School authorities deliberately attempted to erase such beliefs by ignoring or discounting the importance connections between people and the land. The denial of the pasts of colonized peoples enables the production of new knowledge systems which “endow[ed] colonialism with [a] natural legitimacy” (Dirks, 1993, p. 280). Such purposeful, revisionist versions of history, however, must be pervasive in society in order to be effective. The denunciation of alternative historical accounts must be present at various scales of experience in order to become naturalized. The IRS represents the intimate scale of this pervasive denial. This excerpt, found in a student notebook describing Victoria Day highlights one such instance. What is of particular importance is the association of the symbol of the Union Jack and its colours with the ideals of bravery, purity and truth. The paragraph frames the colonial project as both necessary and justified while simultaneously privileging Euro-Canadian understandings of history;

“Victoria Day is the 24<sup>th</sup> of May. It is the date on which Queen Victoria was born. She was Queen of England for 63 years and died at the age of 91. **She was such a good queen and everyone loved her. Our flag is the Union Jack.** It is the flag which flies in every part of the British Empire. The British Empire is every country ruled over by King George VI. Red stands for **Bravery** [*sic*]. White stands for **Purity** [*sic*]. Blue stands for **Truth** [*sic*].” (Dora Cliff Fonds, The Shingwauk Project, 1942, my emphasis)

Such colonial discourses were persistent in the landscape of the residential school. They were part of the explicit attempts, made through symbolic representation of the past, to promote colonial understandings of history.

All school curriculums aim at the transformation of students. This chapter has shown how the residential school has been used as discursive site which endorsed particular representations of how the world ‘should be,’ thus promoting particular social relations. I have demonstrated how colonial authorities have used the power at their disposal to implement disciplinary techniques with the goal of achieving the transformation of Aboriginal students and the internalization of colonial discourses. Such a discussion is important to the field of geographical studies because it highlights how individuals and groups manipulate and utilize space in order to achieve their disciplinary goals. This discussion has highlighted the nature of the relationship between curriculum and ideal outcome. Residential school education aimed at changing the Aboriginal student from an Indian youth to European adults through pressures of curriculum. The disciplinary goals of the IRS curriculum, however, represent one side of the story, the ideal student outcomes. The alternative side of this relationship between curriculum and student outcomes comes to light in the following chapter as I discuss on actual outcomes and resistance.

## **Chapter Six: Resistance in the Residential School**

The residential school was a site of discipline, a place where the assimilative project of church and state officials could ‘civilize’ Aboriginal youth. As the previous chapter describes the construction of both the physical and symbolic space of the IRS catered to this goal. Such spaces, though intended to discipline Aboriginal youths, also provided opportunities for students to resist and subvert IRS goals. Thus, resistance is one of the most persistent themes in residential school literature. Much of this literature focuses on direct exhibitions of resistance. Such instances of direct and overt confrontations between students and school staff are important to any discussion of resistance to IRS goals. However, equally important are the more subtle or ‘off-kilter’ instances of resistance. When considering both direct and indirect forms of resistance what comes to light is a complex and deeply nuanced picture of student agency, determination and persistence.

This chapter examines multifaceted forms of resistance against the IRS system. This discussion addresses two of my research questions. First, I asked about the relationship between IRS curriculum and pedagogy and student products and outcomes. Second, I wondered about students’ ability to resist the goals of colonial education. In addressing these questions I make an argument that the very spaces designed to constrain and discipline Aboriginal youth provided significant opportunities for them to resist. In resisting, students utilized the ‘less-power’ at their disposal to resist the assimilative efforts of colonial education. In this chapter I again utilize the conceptual framework of the overt, hidden, and null curriculum to organize my discussion.

I begin the chapter by addressing the complicated nature of representing resistance. Here I consider the problem of ‘knowing’ motivation as well as the ephemeral nature of many ‘off-

kilter' acts of resistance. Next, I consider acts of resistance in relation to the goals of IRS curriculum. I first discuss how students resisted elements of the overt curriculum. I then discuss how students consistently, and creatively, resisted the goals of the hidden and null curriculums. The hidden and null curriculums seem to be the target for many acts of student resistance as their goals were the most traumatic to Aboriginal social norms and cultural traditions. Central to this discussion is how students resisted these curricular goals through cultural persistence both within and beyond the physical boundaries of the residential school. When acts of resistance against these curriculums are considered together it is clear that resistance within the IRS system was both present and complex.

*i. Resistance and Representation*

The IRS school was a site where 'battles for Truths' were waged daily between students and school staff. Foucault (1980, p. 132) described such battles as attempts to create truth regimes;

There is a battle 'for truth', or at least 'around truth' – it being understood once again that by truth I do not mean 'the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted', but rather 'the ensemble of rules according to effects of power attached to the true', it being understood also that it's not a matter of a battle 'on behalf ' of the truth, but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays.

Truth, or at least the battle surrounding its creation, then, is "linked in a circular relation with the systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it as a 'regime' of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). Truth and power operate in a co-constitutive relationship and are represented in society through techniques and sanctions that serve to validate and make distinctions between true, false, right and wrong (Foucault, 1980; Weir, 2008). These techniques make themselves manifest as efforts at discipline in society, attempts to normalize specific truths through apparatuses such as the IRS. Clearly, then, the

Canadian IRS system plays an important role in the 'battle(s) for truth' Foucault (1980) discusses. The powerful must constantly discipline their 'inferiors' in order to maintain the privilege of particular truths. Everyone in modern society is susceptible to disciplinary power, though it manifests with varying effects, discipline is inescapable (Simons, 1995; Foucault, 2000).

This is true in the IRS setting as well. The inability for subordinates to escape discipline, according to Simons (1995, p. 6), produces constant retaliatory behaviours in them. Such antagonisms are frequently viewed as acts of resistance. If we accept that discipline is inescapable and resistance necessarily follows then we begin to see that manifestation of the domination/resistance couplet (Sharp et al., 2000). This couplet can be understood as the product of "countless processes of domination and resistance" (Sharp et al., 2000, p.1). Thus, domination and resistance are mutually constitutive of one another that they cannot exist independent of one another (Sharp, et al., 2000). Key to my conceptualization of resistance is the idea that it is the product of innumerable interactions between those seeking to dominate and those seeking to avoid domination. As such, resistance may materialize as direct opposition, hidden subversion or a myriad of actions 'in between' these poles.

However, representing acts of resistance in the IRS is a complicated task. I understand that to represent is not merely to (re)present a mirrored image of the data I have collected. Rather, my discussion is at once a presentation of the data, while simultaneously a presentation of my own ontological, epistemological and theoretical understandings. My portrayal, therefore, is both affected by, and reflective of, my own understandings of resistance and discipline as well as children and childhood. Thus, I advocate that there is not one singular or correct understanding of how resistance operated within the IRS system. I acknowledge that every



residential school was unique and as such the knowledge of instances of resistance in one school location is not easily transferable to schools generally. The instances of resistance referred to here are indicative of how *some* students negotiated and resisted the assimilative goals of the IRS system and how they re-narrated the spaces and activities of the residential school. I acknowledge that this is only a part of the story of the Canadian IRS system.

Interpreting or knowing the motivation behind acts which I understand to be resistance provides further epistemological complications. I do not wish to speak for or in place of residential school survivors. Nor do I wish to suggest that my understandings are unproblematic. However, I agree with recent literature that has recognized that the residential school represents a complex site wherein Aboriginal students were not passive recipients (see, for example Milloy, 1999; Miller, 2000, and de Leeuw, 2007). Therefore, I claim that if we accept that students were not passive recipients of the assimilation project of colonial education, we may infer that their behaviour, at times, may have been resistance.

ii. *Resistance and the Overt Curriculum*

I found scant evidence of resistance to the academic subject matter of the IRS in my research. Though it did happen, it is a curious circumstance that the overt curriculum was, perhaps, the least opposed facet of the IRS system. In many areas, the development of schools for Aboriginal youth was desired by *both* missionaries and parents (Miller, 1996). Missionaries believed parents supported a European modeled education because

“[t]hey [Aboriginals] are realizing more and more that they stand on the threshold of a new life, and that if they are to continue to live and to take their place in the new social order which the irresistible advance of civilization has built around them, they and their children must receive the help which the Indian Residential Schools are able to provide.” (Missionary Society Church of England in Canada (MSCC), 1939, pg 10)

More than this, however, Aboriginal leaders and parents realized the necessity of a European based education for their children's economic future. They understood that their children would require certain skills to survive in an increasingly white world and that white educators could provide this education (Miller, 1996). Parents who advocated for the schools, however, did not envision them as institutions that would purposefully attempt to eradicate their language and demean their traditions (Miller, 1996). As time progressed, however, and successive generations of Aboriginal families attended residential schools, many viewed them as the only option (see, for example, Fontaine, 2010). It is perhaps this understanding that explains the lack of recorded instances of resistance to the overt goals of IRS curriculum.

In my research I came across little discussion of student behaviour within the academic classroom. Whether this is because students spent so little time there, or because students were 'well-behaved' in this setting, I cannot be sure. The lack of such discussions in government records does suggest that students were, at least to the understanding of the teacher behaving appropriately. It then occurred to me that student compliance may also be understood to play a role in efforts made by students to resist total assimilation outside the residential school. Dan Kennedy, an Assiniboine who attended the government school at Lebret and then went on to St. Boniface College, is a good example of this. He used the skills and knowledge gained through his education to aid in the Plains Indian campaign against the government suppression of traditional dance ceremonies (Miller, 1996). By behaving in accordance to classroom rules and therefore achieving academic milestones he gained skills that enabled him to resist assimilation policies. Some skills learned in the IRS, then, are crucial to resisting the assimilation efforts beyond the bounds of the residential school.

However, the presence of strictly enforced and detailed rules for behaviour may also suggest that students were indeed ‘acting out.’ Such acts could have manifested in a number of ways. Johnston (1988, p. 30-1) recalls how students at Spanish residential school would delay lining up to return to the classroom stating that they acted “as slowly as they dared...It would have been easier to line up immediately without waiting for the bell, but that would have been the same as surrender.” Inevitably this would disrupt the rigid school schedule and delay instruction; therefore enabling students to reclaim a portion of their time, even if only a moment, for personal use. Other students took a more direct approach to the resistance of the schedule of instruction. One efficient method student testimonials recall is non-compliance. A student at Pelican Lake school remembers, “an ‘older boy’ in one of her early classes who never participated ... he simply sat stolidly at his desk ignoring everything around him” (in Miller, 1996, p. 361). Such actions capitalized on the weaknesses present in the disciplinary efforts of the IRS system by manipulating the physical and symbolic spaces and re-purposing them to serve student rather than colonial goals. Though not grand gestures of defiance such acts purposefully tested the limits of residential school discipline and saw students gain brief but important moments of respite over the colonial agenda.

### *iii. Resistance and the Hidden and Null Curriculums*

It should be made clear that the items which I identify as part of the hidden and/or null curriculums of the IRS system (total assimilation, linguistic destruction and cultural replacement) were stated objectives in government and church documents. School staff, however, did not make these goals obvious to students through direct instruction. Rather, these goals were manifest through the very form and composition of the school. This includes classes as well as the attitudes of the teachers and administration. By repositioning these goals in the hidden

curriculum school officials make several assumptions about residential school students. First, they assume that students will not recognize these hidden attempts to transform their ontological understandings of the world completely. Second, this repositioning suggests a belief that if students do recognize these goals they will also identify the superior nature of European understandings and will thus accept these teachings as natural. Third, it presumes that the separation of child, family, and community coupled with active nullification of their traditional beliefs through the null curriculum will undoubtedly result in a docile individuals who passively receive the IRS agenda. Finally, it assumes that the physical layout of the school and its strict control over student movement in space and time will minimize, or eradicate, the potential for students to subvert curricular goals. However, school officials who worked at the schools on a daily basis discovered that these assumptions were faulty and that with every attempt at transforming the Aboriginal youth they created discovered opportunities for students to challenge these very efforts.

As described above the eradication of Aboriginal languages was a primary objective of the IRS system. Some former teachers argue that Aboriginal languages were respected but simply not required in the residential school setting (Logan, 1994). However, the employment of mostly non-Aboriginal staff across the system coupled with the prohibition of speaking Aboriginal languages within the spaces of a residential school make it clear that the curriculum goals went beyond promoting English skills. Several former students have recalled receiving harsh punishments when they spoke ‘Indian.’ Martha, a student at Kamloops IRS in British Columbia, recalls “at the Indian Residential School, we were not allowed to speak our language; we weren’t allowed to dance, sing because they told us it was *evil* for us to practice our cultural ways” (as interviewed in Haig-Brown, 1991, p. 58, my emphasis). Other students such as

Dorothy, a former student at Shingwauk, remembered “I learned English fast, I forgot my Indian language at the same speed...” (Shingwauk Memories, nd). Language became a source of conflict within the residential school as students across the system have recalled instances when they spoke their language(s) as an act of defiance. Though they often received harsh punishments, some students recall speaking ‘Indian’ as an act of resistance and comfort that provided them with moments of perceived victory over their circumstances (Shingwauk Memories, nd; Johnston, 1988). At Shubenacadie IRS, in Nova Scotia, students went a step further in utilizing their language as a tool of defiance. For example, students there nicknamed a nun “‘Wikew’, the Micmac word for ‘fatty,’” mobilizing their language, despite its prohibition, to express their grievances against a specific individual (Miller, 1996, p. 360). Here, we see how students were able to identify the weaknesses of the disciplinary efforts. The ignorance of residential school staff regarding their language was used to the students advantage as they were able to carry out conversations and make remarks which would have been punished harshly if they had been understood by school staff.

Through strict control of students’ use of space, residential school officials sought to transfer specific ideas about gender relations and bodily comportment to students. As discussed in chapter five, students were segregated into dorms based upon gender and age upon arrival to the IRS. This segregation communicates a specific set of beliefs to students. First, that students could not be trusted with members of the opposite sex. Second, that European based gender norms of separate spheres for men and women were more important than their familial bonds. Students have provided testimonials as to how this segregation often led to feelings of loneliness. Former student Nancy recalls “[w]e were not allowed to sleep with each other and they were very strict about that” (interviewed in Haig-Brown, 1991, p. 75). She also states that this sudden

separation from siblings caused an emotional upheaval that resulted in her beginning to wet the bed (interviewed in Haig-Brown, 1991). Regardless of the cause, bedwetting it was met with harsh, and public, punishments. For example, students at Spanish Residential School who wet their beds were subjected to being identified as ‘piskers,’ enduring beatings with the strap, being soaked in tubs with hot water and eventually forced to sleep on straw mattresses with rubber sheets (Jansen, 2004). All of this punishments ensured that students were punished in the full view of both students and staff. The success of this segregation was dependent on the colonial gaze or constant supervision of students. Despite this, students found opportunities to defy this separation.

Students were frequently able to creatively manipulate their material circumstances in order to contact those of the opposite sex. Students at Shingwauk, for example, discovered that they could make contact with members of the opposite sex by going over the rooftop during the night (Shingwauk reunion in Miller, 1996). Students at Kamloops created an organized network of communication which enabled them to talk to members of the opposite sex. For example, a girl who was working in the kitchens would cut an extra thick slice of bread and place a note in a slot in the middle. The note would then be delivered to its recipient during meal time (Haig-Brown, 1991). These communications were made possible through students’ ability to identify and assess the weaknesses in their material circumstances. They highlight how students played an active role in their own experiences at the residential school.

If we return to the topic of food we can see again how students creatively used their circumstances to engage in acts of resistance. In some schools, students identified a significant disparity in the quality and quantity of food distribution between students and staff; “For them [staff] it was quite different...They didn’t eat the same food we ate; they ate much better food.

We had mush and they had bacon and eggs” (Nancy in Haig-Brown, 1991, p. 61). The constant presence of porridge or ‘mush’ at meal times has been recalled by many former students. A former student of Shingwauk remembers, “[w]e were up at seven and had porridge every morning. You knew what meal you would have every day of every week” (Shingwauk Memories, nd). Instances of thievery became commonplace in many schools as a result of this poor diet. The theft of food often required an organized and group effort by students and led to the sharing of the rewards with those involved as well as with smaller students (Haig-Brown, 1991; Knockwood, 1992; Miller, 1996). The ruining of food destined for school staff was also a creative method of disrupting the standards of the residential school. Knockwood, a former student of Shubenacadie, recalls being told by her male peers that they would, at times, urinate in the milk destined for school staff members (Miller, 1996).

The acts discussed here highlight the creativity and resilience of residential school students. Furthermore, they show that Aboriginal students were not simply passive recipients of colonial agendas. Despite attempts to control them many students were able to identify these goals and make the decision subvert them. Acts of defiance to colonial education occurred in both direct and indirect ways. Direct resistance such as yelling at staff, physical violence, running away or refusal to comply sent an undisguised message to school staff from a person or persons without attempting to hide their identity. These acts occur in what Scott (1990) refers to as the public transcript – or interactions that occur ‘face-to-face’. Scott (1990), however, argues that interactions in the public transcript rarely provide any valuable insight into the feelings of the dominant or subordinate group because its message and messenger are censored by circumstance. The best documentation of acts of direct or overt resistance are made by IRS staff and Indian agents in school records. However, equally important are the acts of subversion

which can be understood as ‘off-kilter’ in nature. These are documented less frequently in the IRS records. These indirect forms of resistance occur in the hidden transcript. Scott (1990) suggests subordinate groups are able to engage in critiques of the dominant group ‘off-stage’ through the hidden transcript or beyond the view of the dominant group. These interactions offer a more detailed understanding of the opinions and feelings of the subordinate people (Scott, 1990). Resistance borne of the hidden transcript, then, materializes as indirect or off-kilter acts that occur outside of the view of authority figures.

That these acts are less present in the documentary record suggests that school staff either were unaware of them or deemed them not important enough to record. Through student testimonials, however, we become aware of both the presence and importance of such acts for students as one student states “Each small step out of line was an important one in self-definition” (Josephine in Haig-Brown, 1991, p. 106). Acknowledging the ability of such acts and the role they played in student empowerment and identity formation allows us to gain an understanding of “the more nuanced and creative ways in which subordinate peoples engage power” (Butz & Ripmeester, 1999, p. 4). Resistance, then, can be as obvious as running away – a common occurrence in the residential school – or as subtle as Knockwood’s (1992, p. 125) recollection of wiggling her toes under her blanket and thinking “You ain’t my boss and I’ll wiggle all I want” after being told “not to move a muscle” by ‘Wikew.’

Students articulated their grievances through both direct and indirect acts of resistance. While some were directed at specific instances, procedures, or individuals others were directed at the residential school system and colonial education generally. A picture of student experience and reaction to colonial agendas emerges through the acknowledgement of student resistance that is indirect or ambiguous. This picture highlights how the spaces of the residential school, both



physical and symbolic, become re-narrated and repurposed by Aboriginal students. It also demonstrates how students utilized these spaces against the very forces that sought to manipulate and transform them.

Acts of resistance were a constant companion to efforts of discipline within the residential school. An image of the residential school as a complex and fractured environment develops through the consideration of student testimonials, school, and government records simultaneously. It is clear that, despite their efforts, school authorities were never able to achieve complete control over the pupils. Acknowledging acts of direct and indirect resistance is central to understanding how students negotiated the circumstances within a system that sought to dehumanize and anonymize in ways that both played a role in the development, and displayed their self-identities.

The process of colonial education was inherently contradictory. It attempted to create self-sufficient individuals who would be good citizens, while creating a cultural and social environment that disadvantaged Aboriginal individuals. This predicament allows for resistance, and, I argue, actually calls for it through its insistence on particular principles (democracy, freedom, economic independence) whilst simultaneously creating and maintaining systemic barriers for particular groups (i.e. Aboriginals). Though the school is an important discursive site central to the communication, and (re)production of culture, it is clear that the process is not a simple transaction. In the following chapter I explore the complicated nature of communicating curricular content in the residential school. Through a discussion on art and the role of Aboriginal cultural elements in the context of colonial curriculum I highlight how elements of residential school education were created as reaction to some student's cultural persistence.

## **Chapter Seven: Artful Resistance to Colonial Education**

The IRS system is just one element of the government offensive against First Nations culture and society. As I began work on this project I was interested in how the intimate struggles between students and staffs were ‘played out’ in the residential school, not only in time and space, but also in the curricular products of students. I was particularly interested in how visual art and other cultural products were mobilized as tools of resistance within the school environment. There is, however, a paucity of actual student produced works in the archives I consulted. Looking at the documentation available, I considered how visual arts and cultural products were placed in the larger resistance movement of cultural persistence, a resistance that has been discussed by scholars before me.<sup>23</sup> By considering art in this broader residential school context I have concluded that Aboriginal art and cultural products have been utilized by both students *and* staff in a variety of ways.

In this chapter I consider two of my primary research questions. First, I consider how Aboriginal students resisted the assimilative goals of colonial education. Second, I contemplate how residential school staff received this resistance and dealt with it. In attempting to find answers to these questions I found that some elements of student resistance were identified by school staff. Teachers and school administration then attempted to reposition these acts in ways that would incorporate them to the disciplinary nature of the residential school. Specifically, methods of cultural persistence such as the use of Indigenous languages and the continuation of other cultural symbols and traditions were repositioned within the school curriculum. This repositioning envisioned such cultural products as possible tools for the economic assimilation of school graduates.

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<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Knockwood, 1992; Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999; de Leeuw, 2007 and Fontaine, 2010.

I begin the chapter with a discussion about the creation of art and cultural products within the residential school. Here, I contemplate the place of creative expression in the concomitant curriculums of the residential school. Next, I consider the efforts of cultural persistence within the IRS setting. Specifically, I discuss a collection of artwork created by male students at Shingwauk IRS in 1948. From here, I trace staff responses to student expressions of Indigeniety from the early to late twentieth century. In this section I discuss the connections between student products, folk art and IRS curriculum. I end the chapter by exploring the relationship between instances of artistic expression created in varying residential school contexts.

*i. Creative Expression in the Residential School*

There is little explicit discussion regarding the construction of cultural products and visual art in the early documentary records or the IRS system. Such discussion is not present in government reports and school records until the 1930s. Documents I studied have shown that students did spend time drawing, not only at Shingwauk, but at various residential schools. Evidence for this can be seen in various resources. For example, discharge papers for a student from Shingwauk in 1959 list ‘Indian Art’ as a completed course (RG10, Vol. 6859). My research at the Shingwauk Project Archives and the General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church yielded a number of student pieces of artwork. Some of these creations were surely created in the classroom as part of a lesson or activity. For example, figures seven and eight show grade two depictions of a Dutch and ‘Eskimo’ child as drawn by two different students. These drawings were accompanied by a descriptive text that was copied into the notebooks verbatim by students. For other drawings, however, it is much more difficult to state with any certainty the context in which they were created. This includes the fifty-four drawings in the

Anne Clarkson collection. We know that Anne Clarkson was a teacher at Shingwauk. However, there is no clear statement to suggest whether these drawings were made as part of an art class, during leisure time, or during some other academic instruction. What we do know is Ms. Clarkson was impressed by her student's abilities, "[t]hese boys do not trace but can hold a picture close by and draw with such accuracy. I have watched them" (1948, The Shingwauk Project Archive, np).<sup>24</sup>

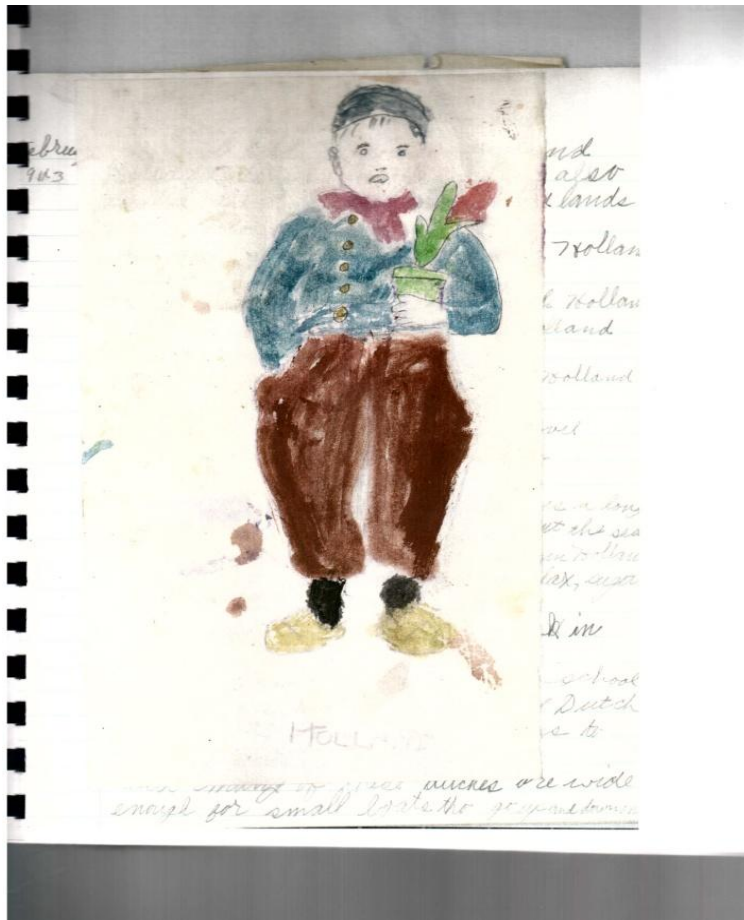


Figure Seven; “Dutch” boy depicted in grade two social studies notebook, (1942), (source The Shingwauk Project, Dora Cliff Fonds)

Drawing, however, is just one way that residential school students were able to interact with the arts during their education. Other forms of creative expression were part of the residential school curriculum as well. Music, for example, was an integral aspect of religious

<sup>24</sup> The entire collection of student art was produced by male students.



Figure Eight; “Eskimo” girl depicted in grade two social studies notebook, (1942), (source The Shingwauk Project, Dora Cliff Fonds)

services at many schools (Miller, 1996). The interaction of students with any medium of creative expression, however, was strictly monitored and restricted. Students have recalled how they were not allowed to dance and sing according to their traditions (Haig-Brown, 1991). Rather, they were to sing the approved hymns in the approved context of religious, specifically Christian, ceremony. In the curricular sense, then, creative expression by IRS students was meant to reinforce and promote colonial discourses. Despite such supervision, students’ creative expressions did not always yield the desired results. The idea that student creativity could be censored and directed to serve the colonial project assumed a level of student passivity. Indeed, de Leeuw (2007) has argued that student art was viewed as a sign of successful assimilation by some staff, as long as it depicted the appropriate content. For students, however, the chance to

engage with the arts was an opportunity to negotiate their identities within the strict confines of the residential school curriculum.

Creative expression, or artistic interactions, would have been important to many IRS students. Both of my interviewees stressed the important role that art played in Aboriginal communities throughout Canada. The Director of Research at the AHF noted that Aboriginal communities have deeply engrained connections to art and creative expression, but stressed that such cultural endeavours are part of a holistic approach to everyday life (May 3, 2011). Similarly, the artist I spoke with noted the significance of art while cautioning that “the term art would *not* have been applied to masks, rituals, songs, dance etc. It was part of everyday life and served the community by paying homage to its good health and continued prosperity” (May 17, 2011, my emphasis). Contemporary Aboriginal artists and scholars have also argued the importance of art to First Nations communities. In her commentary on the Alberta curriculum LaRoque (1975, p. 26) commented that “[a]rt has woven its way into so many facets of Indian life. Art objects were not only functional or simply aesthetic, but were also at times expressions of the Indians ‘*Weltanschauung*’” or world-view. Such sentiments support the idea that creative expression was, most likely, important to many residential school students. Jensen (1992, p.17) agrees, in her discussion of Aboriginal art history, “[i]n my language there is no word for ‘Art.’ This is not because we are devoid of Art, but because Art is so powerfully integrated with all aspects of life, we are replete with it.” This has also been reflected by student testimonials, such as the former Inkameep student “I think everyone here that was in the classroom, were artists...” (as quoted in de Leeuw, 2007, p. 231). This important link between Aboriginal cultures and efforts of creative cultural expression underpins my argument that students may have used artistic opportunities to negotiate the goals of colonial education in the residential schools across

Canada. Furthermore, that teachers saw some expressions as a threat to colonial agendas and elicited the responses discussed in the following sections.

ii. *Art, Creative Expression and Cultural Persistence in the IRS*

Specific theoretical understandings of children ground the arguments made here. The first is that I understand the child neither as empty vessel nor blank slate. Rather, the child is a political being who both has, and utilizes, their agency to negotiate their identity (Jenks, 1996). Furthermore, they play a role in the constitution of their environment (Holloway & Valentine, 2000). If we accept this then we must also consider that student's actions, from the grandest of resistant gestures to the most seemingly insignificant, may be purposeful political and/or cultural statements. This, however, does not seem to have been a consideration for residential school staff and Indian agents in the first half of the twentieth century (de Leeuw, 2007). Discussions of students in school records suggest that Aboriginal children were viewed as blank slates on which teachers could inscribe their colonial discourses, religious dogma and social expectations. Thus, in the eyes of residential school staff, the potential of student produced art to articulate any meaningful message was limited. Artistic products of residential school students were understood as innocent expressions, not student negotiations of their colonial interactions (de Leeuw, 2007).

The student art I encountered at The Shingwauk Project Archives, however, do not tell a story of uncontested assimilation. Rather, they can be read as complex articulations of student identities, presentations of hybridized students who are at once Aboriginal child and colonial student. The conclusions I have reached about this artwork are theoretically bounded to Pratt's (1992) discussion of autoethnography and transculturation. As discussed in chapter two Pratt (1992) understands autoethnography or autoethnographic expression as instances when

subjugated peoples engage with the terms used by colonizers to represent themselves. When considering student works of art in this fashion it is important to recognize that such autoethnographic texts are not “autochthonous forms of self-representation” (Pratt, 1992, p. 7). Rather, they are “partial collaboration[s] with and appropriation[s] of the idioms of the conqueror” (Pratt, 1992, p.7). Therefore, such autoethnographic texts must not be considered as simple self-representations of the colonized. Creative expressions, then, are understood as negotiated combinations of Aboriginal and colonizer cultural elements that both reflect and constitute students lived experiences.

Art from Anne Clarkson’s collection can be read in such a way (The Shingwauk Project). While analyzing the Clarkson collection seven primary themes emerged in the student’s artwork. The themes identified include; animals, sports, vehicles, nature, ‘Indians,’ structures, and superheroes. Animals account for twenty-four of the images, sports and vehicles are both featured in nine images, there are five images that portray landscapes and other aspects of nature, three images show ‘Indians’ in traditional dress, and there are two images that depict both structures and superheroes. I also organized the artwork into subcategories in each theme (see appendix three for a complete breakdown). Despite recording the numerical frequency of the themes and content in the images of the collection I acknowledge that the recurrence of an image does not necessarily equate with importance. However, the presence of certain images in the collection does provide some insight into IRS student’s lives. I agree with scholars who have suggested that the act of drawing for children is both “socially constituted and framed” (Fulkova & Tipton, 2011, p. 136). For children, drawing is an imaginative way to both reflect and “‘construct’ their current and expanding understanding of themselves and their worlds” (Wright,



2011, p. 157). Furthermore, children's art is often intimately linked with their experiences (Coates & Coates, 2011).

With these thoughts in mind I began to consider how the themes and images in the compilation could be considered when looked at as a collection and individually. What became clear was that the images drawn by these students display a tension. This tension is a manifestation of IRS students' attempt to navigate through the purposefully life-altering experience of colonial education, where they negotiated their identities, both remembering their pre-residential school lives and taking on some elements of their colonial encounter. The same student produces figures nine and ten. Figure nine depicts the bust of an Aboriginal elder dressed in a traditional headdress while figure ten shows a sleek 1947 automobile.



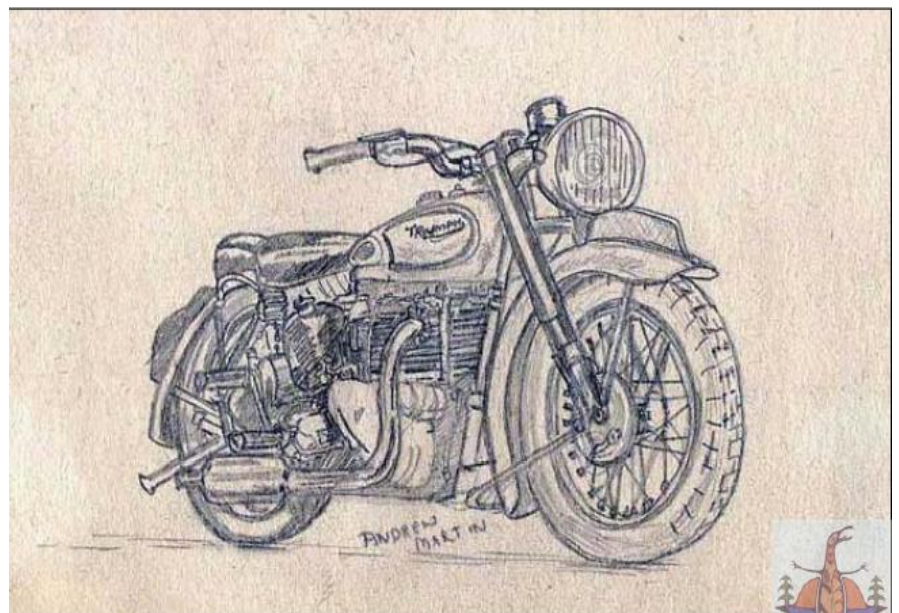
Figure Nine; Aboriginal elder, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)



Figure Ten; Automobile, (1948),  
Anne Clarkson Collection (source The  
Shingwauk Project)

The two images are an example of the trend of the whole collection, they depict a sense of hybridity. They combine modern elements such as motorcycles, motorboats and National Hockey League (NHL) stars, with drawings of landscapes, animals and Aboriginal peoples (see figures eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen respectively).<sup>25</sup> The transculturation evidenced through these hybridized representations is a reflection of the lived experiences of IRS students.

Figure Eleven: Motorcycle, (1948),  
Anne Clarkson Collection (source The  
Shingwauk Project)



<sup>25</sup> The mark seen at the bottom of several of these images is the emblem for The Shingwauk Project Archives.



Figure Twelve: Speedboat, (1948),  
Anne Clarkson Collection (source The  
Shingwauk Project)

Figure Thirteen: (Tedder) Ted  
Kennedy, (1948), Anne Clarkson  
Collection (source The Shingwauk  
Project)







Figure Fourteen: Horse in natural habitat, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)



Figure Fifteen: Aboriginal, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)

It is neither total mimicry of colonial discourse achieved through passive reception, nor is it representative of students embodying two disparate cultures. Rather the images can be read as articulations of residential school students negotiating a very complicated identity building process, they absorbed some elements of Euro-Canadian culture while simultaneously articulating their alterity. I argue the high number of images related to animals and nature exposes this.

Two images in particular suggested to me that the artist was, perhaps, attempting to show more than a simple likeness to the animals. Figures sixteen and seventeen both depict a family of animals in their natural habitats. In figure sixteen two bear cubs are in the forest with their mother. There is significantly more detail in the drawings of both the mother bear and the cubs than their surroundings. The natural habitat is present but the eye is drawn to the three animals rather than the landscape. Figure seventeen depicts a group of four raccoons on a river's edge. The two smaller raccoons seem to be waiting while a larger raccoon enters the water, perhaps to get food. A second, larger raccoon sits at a slight elevation looking upon the smaller raccoons, possibly to watch for predators. The animals depicted in these images are, at the surface, portraying a likeness to their real-world referents. However, if we accept the argument that children's art is an active process, then art can be understood as a tool used to negotiate children's experiences as well as to express their emotions. These images, then, may be considered as something *more* than a *re*-presentation. Rather, they may be viewed as expressions of desire, loneliness, or nostalgia for the families they knew prior to entering the residential school. I argue that the presence of mainstream Canadian cultural elements in IRS art suggests an ongoing process of transculturation and identity negotiation. However, this is not



Figure Sixteen: Bear Family, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)

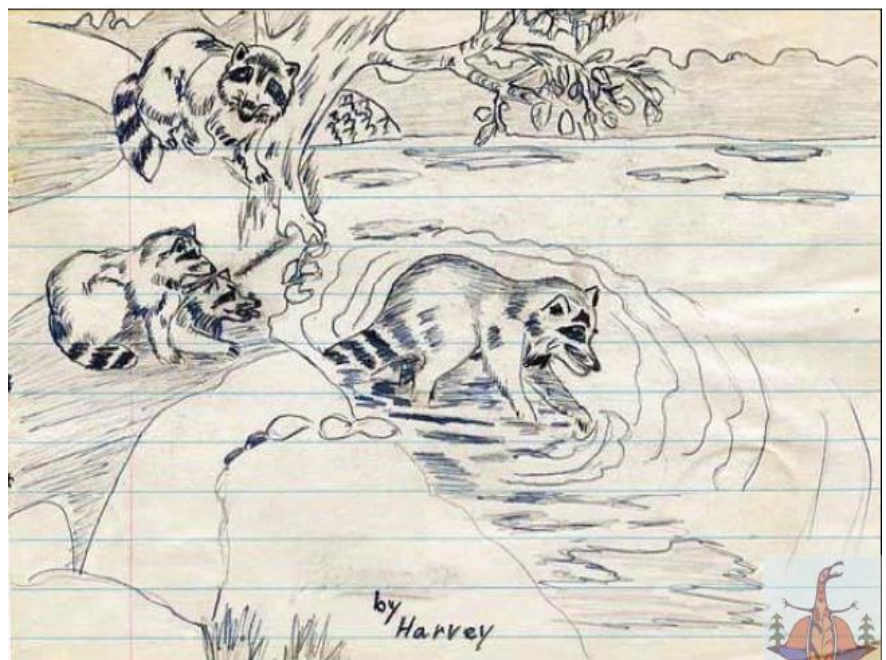


Figure Seventeen: Raccoon Family, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)

to say that students would not have encountered, or found interesting and appealing, these aspects of modern society without the residential school. However, it can be said that the purpose and form of the residential school promoted student's appreciation of Canadian cultural elements and technology.

Another interesting element of the Anne Clarkson collection is that it is expressly gendered. All of the fifty-four images in the collection were drawn by male students at Shingwauk IRS. The images drawn by these boys align with Euro-Canadian gender norms. For example, figure eighteen depicts a man riding a motorcycle while figure nineteen shows a baseball game and figure twenty depicts the character Tarzan. The images referred to here reflect the ideals of British Imperial masculinity as described by Semple (2008, p. 397) including “energy, virility and strength, refined by moral notions of decisiveness, courage and endurance.” The image of Tarzan is particularly interesting. The son of British parents marooned on the coast of Africa, Tarzan grows up in a community of apes where he eventually becomes their king (Burroughs, 1912). In popular culture, the character of Tarzan has come to represent the notion of the noble savage as his character displays a close connection to nature, physical fitness, loyalty, and the renunciation of modern amenities and wealth. Despite the favourable characterization of Tarzan the tale makes clear that his lifestyle cannot be accommodated in modern societies.

Images of hockey are the most prevalent subtheme in the collection. The presence of hockey in the collection is particularly important as the sport is closely associated with understandings of what it means to be a Canadian male. This association stems from the increasing popularity of the sport from the late nineteenth century onwards (McKinley, 2006). The early twentieth century saw the sport garner increasing popularity as well as a growing number of organized leagues. In some schools, such as Pelican Lake and Shingwauk, male students had the opportunity to play the sport (Anglican Church of Canada, nd and Shingwauk Newspaper, 1970). Both the prevalence of hockey imagery as well as the detailed nature of the drawings suggests, then, that hockey was an important part of these student’s lives (see figures



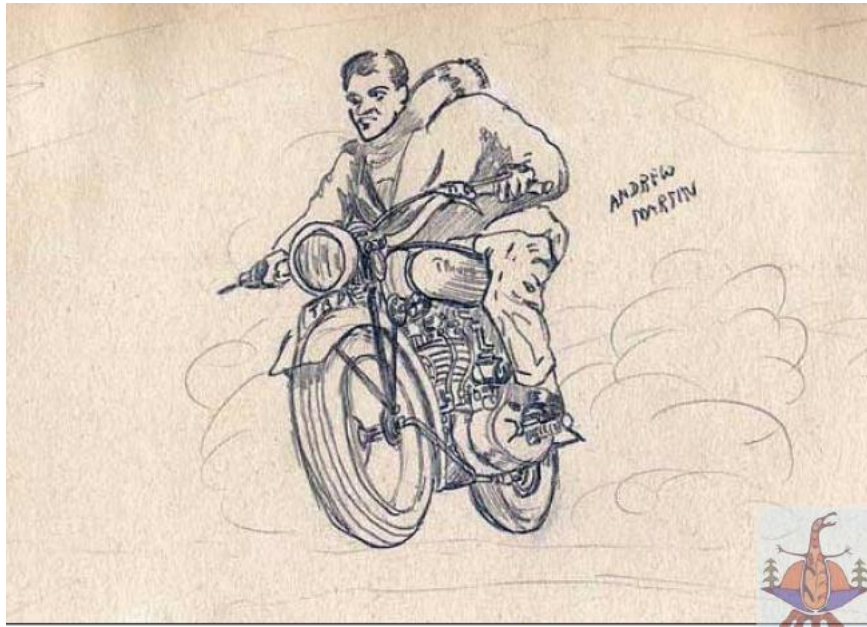


Figure Eighteen : Man riding motorcycle, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)

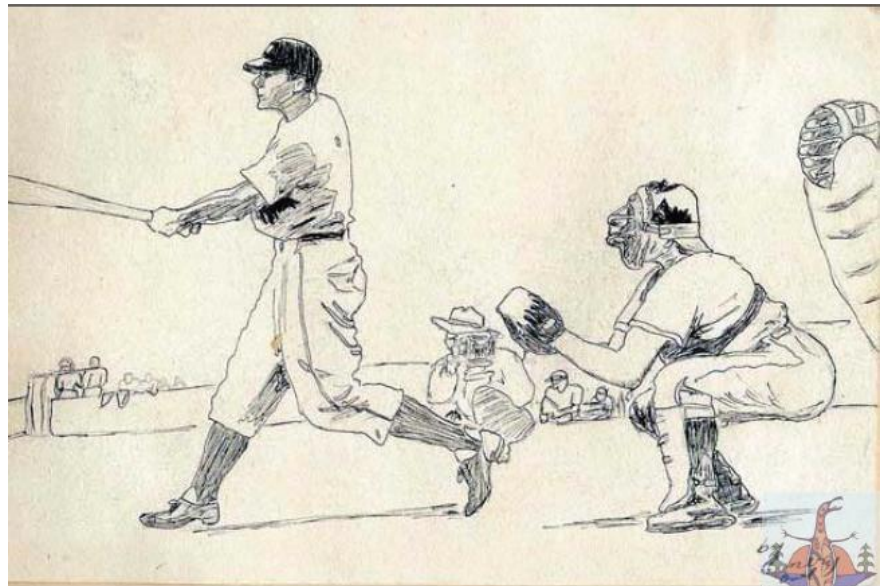


Figure Nineteen: Baseball game, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)

twenty-one and twenty-two). The details present in the images also suggest knowledge of not only the rules of the game but also how the game manifests in action. The importance of sport in the lives of male IRS students aligns well with the Victorian constructions of gender roles and appropriate spaces for men and women.



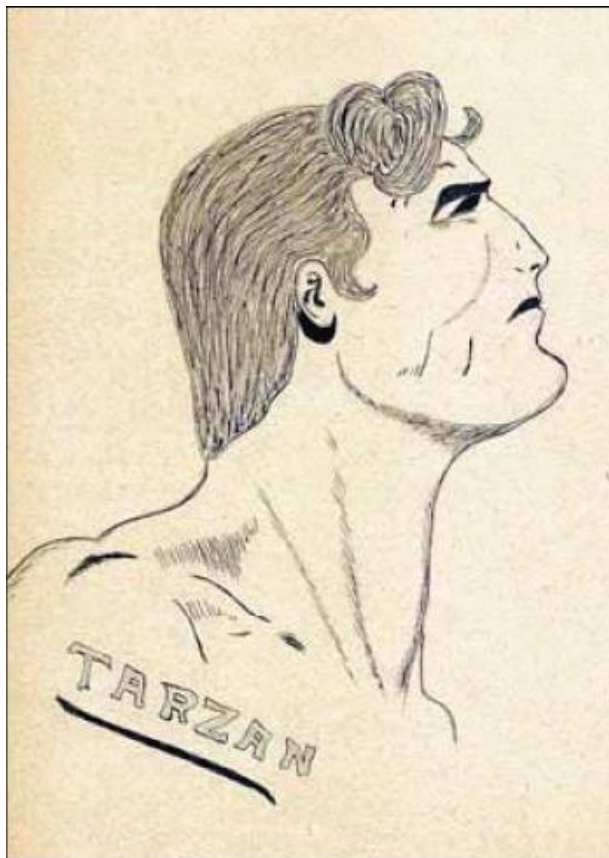


Figure Twenty: Tarzan, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)

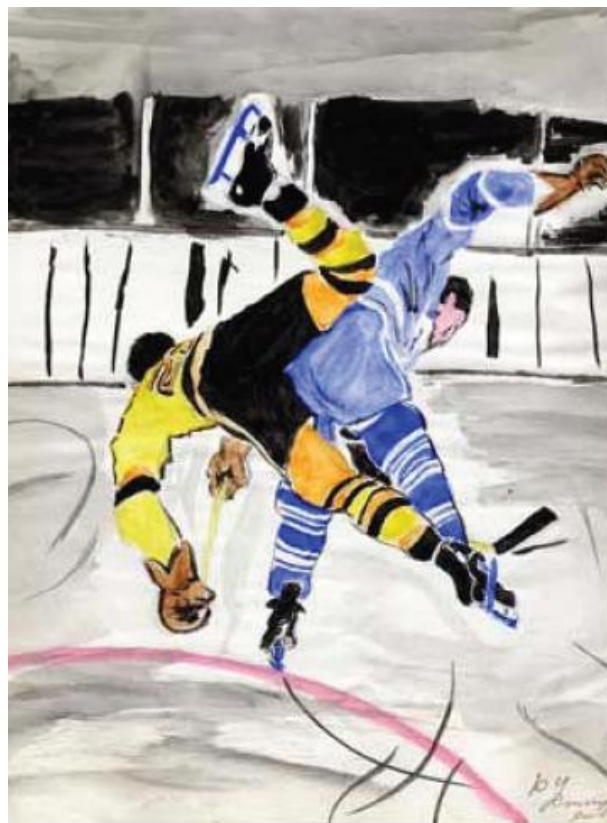


Figure Twenty-one: Hockey-hit, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)

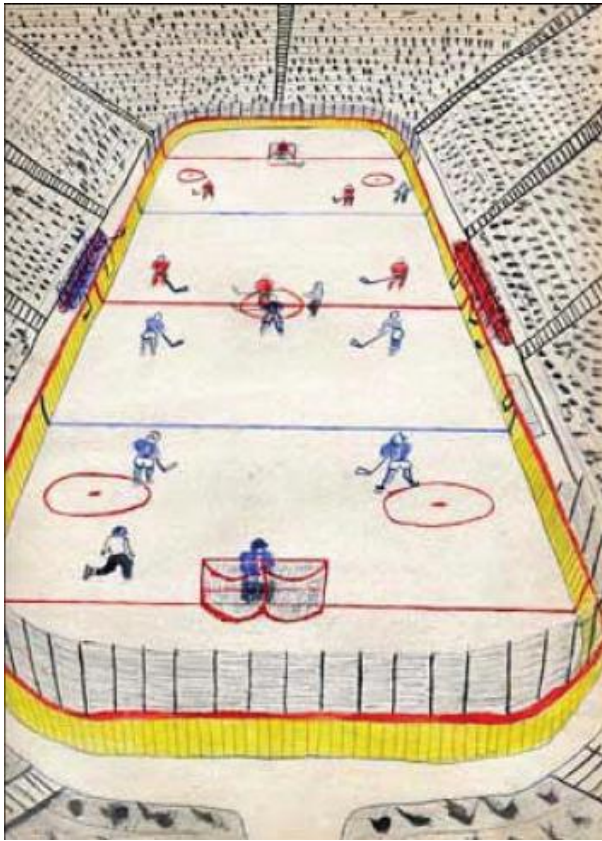


Figure Twenty-two: Hockey arena, (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)

It is important to recognize that the presence of some of the images might be related to the context in which they were created. For example, figure twenty-three shows an eagle with its wings extended. The eagle, however, is depicted upon a base line and the student has used a series of straight lines emanating from a concentrated locale to guide the proportions in his drawing. This is a teaching technique used in some art classes to assist students in portraying an object in a similar likeness to the real life referent. Students, however, may have also used



Figure Twenty-three: Eagle (1948), Anne Clarkson Collection (source The Shingwauk Project)

elements of Euro-Canadian culture to express something beyond the simple referents of the image. Here, I find support in de Certeau's concept of 'La Perruque.' A concept explaining instances of workers disguising their own work as work done for their employer, 'La Perruque' allows us to consider student products as creative uses of their time and careful exhibitions of student identity in the IRS setting. Central to de Certeau's (1984) work is the creative ways in which oppressed individuals and groups are able to create "innumerable ways of playing and foiling the others game" (p. 18 as quoted in Pile, 1997, p. 15). Drawings such as figure twenty-four, then, which was a loose piece of paper found in a social studies notebook, may be understood as a clever use of the carefully scheduled time for students' own purposes. In another instance figure twenty-four depicts four animals; a goat, a dog, a cat, and a rooster standing atop one another looking into a residence window. The scene is reminiscent of the folktale *The Town Musicians of Bremen* as recorded by brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. In the story the animals find themselves searching for a new home as their old age prevents them from carrying out their household duties. Together the animals embark on a journey to Bremen where they hope they can make a living as musicians. Their journey is halted when they stop to have a night's rest and find themselves outside a cottage occupied by thieves. After the animals frighten and outwit them the animals settle in to the cottage for a new life together.

I do not wish to impose any specific motivation upon the images, but I do not think it too far a stretch to suggest that the image may have been produced in class time as an enjoyable distraction from the monotonous disciplinary efforts of residential school life. Similarly it may be that the artist may have disguised the drawing as sanctioned class work. It is curious that the image reflects a European folktale. I began, then, to wonder why this tale might have resonated





Figure Twenty-four: “The Town Musicians of Bremen”, nd, Dora Cliff Fonds, source The Shingwauk Project

with IRS students. Folklore and mythology scholar Maria Tatar (2004) highlights some important elements of this story. These elements, I argue, align with the historical and political experiences of some First Nation communities in Canada. First, there is the notion that the animals were cast out or threatened by their owners after outliving their usefulness (Tatar, 2004). As I described in chapter four, the years after the War of 1812 saw a shift in perception regarding the ‘usefulness’ of the Aboriginal population to the British and later Canadian government. Furthermore, the tale highlights the antagonistic relationship between master and slave (Tatar, 2004). While I acknowledge that the relationship between residential school students and administrators was not that of master and slave, the power disparity between animal and owner has similarities to student and teacher in the IRS context. The story is also concerned with how

the animals are able to negotiate their changing life circumstances. The animals, by engaging in a cooperative relationship are able to carve out a new life for themselves. As displayed in the small selection of student art comprising the Anne Clarkson collection the negotiation of changing life circumstances seems to be a dominant premise. This image, then, may have been an effort of this particular student to ‘do more’ than re-present a scene from a folktale. It may have been an attempt to convey certain emotions evoked by the themes present in the story.

I argue that students took their opportunities to engage with the arts both as a chance to creatively negotiate and express their identities as well as to challenge the goals of colonial education. There is, as de Leeuw (2007, p. 253) states, “a risk of over-interpreting the [artistic] work” as resistance unless there is evidence that indicates students knew they were subverting curricular goals of the IRS. However, there are some students’ statements and scholarly research that make this argument (see de Leeuw, 2007 and Milloy, 1999). However, I draw upon Scott’s (1985, 1987, 1990) discussions about resistance in which he argues that we may infer the intent of an individual’s actions by looking at the nature of the act itself. As such, we may infer that students knew that they were both engaging in an act of cultural perseverance, as well as, an act of subversion by presenting hybridized visions of their identities rather than mirroring solely colonial characteristics. My goal, then, is not to state with certainty that I know students were engaging in resistance through their art. Rather, I seek to raise the possibility of student resistance. Such an interpretation of this collection of student artwork recognizes the agency of IRS students by understanding their work as representations, not of abject colonial subjects, but of students as architects, as individuals and groups of cultural survival.

I understand student’s creative expression in art as part of a broader effort of resistance to colonial education through cultural persistence. Acts of cultural persistence materialized in

innumerable forms and are, perhaps, the most consistent methods of resistance utilized by both students and graduates of the IRS system. I consider such articulations of cultural persistence to be representative of the acts of indirect resistance or ‘ordinary weapons’ Scott (1985, 1990) discusses. Such a movement needed no formal organization or stated leader in order to be a formidable obstacle to efforts of colonial education. It is perhaps its organic nature and fluidity that enabled it to be a disruptive force. Instances of the cultural persistence movement include but are not limited to; traditional forms of singing and dancing, the continued use of artistic techniques for carving and beadwork, the use of traditional Aboriginal iconography and symbolism in the production of art, the use of traditional languages and the continued ritualistic practices based on Aboriginal spiritual, social and political understandings such as the potlatch, both within and beyond the residential school (Milloy, 1999).<sup>26</sup> Cultural persistence was an unrelenting obstacle to the success of colonial education. The link between continued cultural practice and perceived recidivism to the inappropriate behaviours associated with Aboriginal communities is made clear in government reports (Milloy, 1999).<sup>27</sup> As such, any expression of Indigeneity by students would have been viewed as problematic by IRS staff. With this understanding in mind, I claim that the behaviour of school staff and government officials in relation to expressions of student’s identities tell us a great deal about what was happening in residential schools.

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<sup>26</sup> The potlatch is a traditional ceremony common among the Pacific Northwest Coast First Nations people. The potlatch is a gift giving, dancing, and feasting ceremony held to mark important life events (Cole, 1992). Events including the naming of a child, marriage, and deaths, as well as, to confer upon individuals ranks and privileges (Cole, 1991). The ceremony is based in an tradition of wealth redistribution where the host of the gathering bestows upon their guests gifts (Cole, 1991).

<sup>27</sup> The effects of perceived recidivism for residential school students were severe and can be seen in the case of D\*\*\*\* O\*\*\*\*\* who attended Shingwauk IRS. Upon her graduation D\*\*\*\* has received a recommendation from Principal Reverend Roy Phillips for entrance in the certified nursing assistant program. Her reference was revoked when it had come to Reverend Phillip’s attention, “that Miss O\*\*\*\*\* has been frequenting the Garden River Indian Reserve, near here, and consorting with the most undesirable people there” (Rev Roy Phillips, 1959, The Shingwauk Project).

iii. *Staff Responses – Aboriginal Culture in the “New” IRS Curriculum*

The documentary record shows the complex history of Aboriginal culture in the IRS. There is clear and voluminous evidence that the IRS sought to eradicate the ‘Indian’ within the Aboriginal child. Efforts to do so can be seen, for example, as Principal George Ley King (1899) of Shingwauk and Wawanosh Homes wrote,

[t]he hereditary indolent habits with which an Indian boy invariably enters the Home, his apathy and reserve even to a disinclination to speak when addressed are obstacles at first difficult to contend with, but under the systematic routine, discipline and general influences of the Home they are slowly but gradually overcome, and we have in place beaming faces indicative of happiness... (Algoma Missionary News, p. 61).

Reports by school principals and Indian agents that recorded this ‘happiness’ and touted the success of the IRS system only show part of the picture. The disorganization of residential school resources meant that not only was the eradication of the ‘Indian’ not happening, but many students were not progressing through the academic curriculum at the desired pace (Milloy, 1999).

School inspectors had been citing the inadequacies of the residential school system since the early twentieth century. Inspector Markle in 1914, for example, reported that students in the most advanced class were struggling to read and remarked, “[i]t seems a pity that a book or books, containing subjects of interest, to the Indian youths were not provided for the use of Indian schools” (as cited in Milloy, 1999, p. 173). Similarly, Inspector Warkentin told the Indian Department in 1940 that they should consider contemporary literature on curriculum that suggests the curricular content and its delivery should be made to fit the child rather than attempting to fit the child to the curriculum (Milloy, 1999, p. 172). In response, attempts were made to improve the administration of schools and the quality of teaching at residential schools. Improvements included the distribution of “[a] teacher’s magazine, the Indian School Bulletin.”

These were delivered every two months which addressed [p]roblems of school administration and teaching techniques” (Indian Affairs Branch, 1947, p 216). In the mid twentieth century we see a shift in pedagogical practice that emphasizes more effective teaching techniques and that places a student’s cultural heritage within the purview of curricular content.

These new efforts also saw attempts to have students spend more time in the classroom. The Annual Report of 1947 reports that “[t]here is no phase of Indian Affairs in which a healthier growth can be noticed than in education.” It highlights that students at Alert Bay IRS in grades one through four as well as eight were attending a full day of academic instruction (Indian Affairs Branch, p. 207). The Indian Affairs Branch also endeavored to procure more qualified teachers as noted in the Annual Report of 1950, “[a] steady improvement was shown in the qualifications and experience of teachers” (Indian Affairs Branch, p. 68). Seeing a positive correlation between the improved “professional standing of teaching staff” and student attendance and success, the department, “took over responsibility for the employment of teaching staff at all government owned residential schools” (Indian Affairs Branch, 1955, p. 51). Accompanying the attempt to provide a more equitably funded education with qualified instructors were curricular changes. Aboriginal history, cosmology and symbols were moved from the null curriculum, where they were ignored, to the overt curriculum.

I suggest two possible motives for the sanctioned presence of Indigeniety in residential school material. Firstly, that officials recognized the inherent inefficiency of a system built upon the premise of “dramatic cultural difference, the ‘savage’ as opposed to the civilized,” but that failed to address such differences in its content or pedagogy (Milloy, 1999, p. 172). This recognition led to increasing cultural sensitivity and was coupled with a pedagogical shift to include culturally appropriate educational material. The second motivation may lie in the



realization that the total annihilation of Aboriginal culture was not going to be successful. Students' continued efforts at cultural persistence and the Indian agents and school staff identification of high rates of perceived 'recidivism' among students made this clear. Most likely a result of a combination of both, IRS staff in the mid-twentieth century begin to reposition Indigenous cultural elements in the overt curriculum. However, these elements are quickly redirected to serve colonial purposes.

Administrators and staff began to allow students some cultural expression. However, such expressions are tied to the destructive colonial discourses typical of the residential school. This is clear in the school newspapers from St. Micheals, Cariboo at William's Lake and St. Cyprians. Student produced drawings are present throughout the "historical edition" of St. Micheal's newspaper titled *STOP! STOP!*, published in May 1968. Despite student involvement, however, the newspaper makes clear its colonial objectives. Prefaced with a note "From the Principal's Desk" of J.J. Warner, the tone of the newspaper positions Aboriginal parents as inadequate while extolling the colonial project;

As we read through various letters and documents to prepare for this 'Historical' edition one thing becomes clear, many parents, even 50 years ago seemed to forget their children once they entered residence. (1968, p.2)

He continues, "[h]ave you written to ask how your child is doing in school or residence? ...If you haven't and the child doesn't do quite as well as you would have hoped, don't blame the teacher, or the education system or the residence or the Indian Affairs branch. Blame yourself" (Warner, 1968, p.2). It is clear, then, that the 'culturally inclusive' version of the residential school that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century remains married to the beliefs of its foundation; Aboriginal parents were inadequate role models and beyond redemption in the colonial project.

The colonial discourse of assimilation through civilization is pervasive throughout the school newspapers I examined. The cover of *The Anglican Newsletter* from St. Cyprians IRS shows an Aboriginal man in traditional dress standing by a drum (see figure twenty-five). But the title, *The Anglican Newsletter*, immediately reminds us that the institution is, first and foremost, an institution of the Anglican Church (1958). Throughout the paper students provide drawings and statements which express excitement to go home for the summer holidays. The student's excitement, however, is tempered with reminders that the purpose of the school is "train and educate the boys and girls of our school in the Christian Way of Life" and that students should "try to keep our clothes spic and span" over the holidays (1958, p. 12).

A production from Cariboo IRS titled *My Heart is Glad* includes a large number of images and stories from grade seven and eight students. The beginning of the paper features statements from school staff providing a rationale for the venture. The principal first congratulates students for their efforts and expresses his hopes that their communication of the "tales and folklores of your ancestors" in the paper will "stimulate and increase your interest" (1964, np).<sup>28</sup> They also remind the reader that the production of the booklet is a curricular endeavour with aims;

- 1) To increase competence and ease in the use of written and spoken English.
- 2) To encourage the expression of each individual's experience and creativity.
- 3) To promote the understanding and enjoyment of Speech Arts. (Ringwood, in *My Heart is Glad*, 1964, np)

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<sup>28</sup> There is an interesting connection here between the relegation of Aboriginal histories and cosmological beliefs to the realm of fiction by colonial educators and 'salvage anthropology.' Both 'salvage archeology' and 'salvage anthropology' seek to study, and memorialize, cultural artifacts at risk of being damaged or permanently destroyed. 'Salvage archeology' focuses on the study of material sites in danger of being irreparably damaged by development (Hester, 1968). Similarly, 'salvage anthropology' attempted to document 'dying' cultures (Lofchie, 1975). Often such anthropological work removed cultural material to be 'preserved' in museums (Beck, 2010). The exhibitions created from such collections defined Aboriginal groups to outsiders, however, they were "often were clouded by the collectors' or scholars' own culturally derived myopia, and though they contained much valuable material, the pictures they presented were inaccurate in an insidious way: they were based on a false definition of 'aboriginal'" (Beck, 2010, p. 159). By changing the terms used to describe Aboriginal histories and cosmologies colonial educators were also defining important elements of Aboriginal culture as less relevant.

They insist that “[e]very student is represented by some legend, story or description” within and reminded us that all contributions, whether a written work, or an illustration were supervised (1964, np). It is clear from these papers that the way that Aboriginal cultural elements are presented in this more ‘inclusive’ residential school curriculum is a purposeful and particular representation. For teachers the link between creative expressions of Aboriginal students and curricular objectives created a seemingly ideal opportunity to have students engage their Indegeniety in a way that served the colonial purpose. Simultaneously, these productions position the colonial educator as the ‘saviour’ of Aboriginal culture. This is made clear with statements such as “[w]e hope that each student will read the legends and stories aloud at home,



Figure Twenty-five; Cover of *The Anglican Newsletter* from St. Cyprians IRS, 1958, (source The Shingwauk Project)

and bring back to school next fall many new stories. Our Cariboo heritage of song, story and legend can easily be lost unless this generation makes an effort to conserve it” (Ringwood, 1964, np). The opening remarks in the follow up volume of *My Heart is Glad* produced in 1965 reinforces this notion of colonial educator as savior

Without such efforts [the production of the newsletter] many of the tales of yesteryear along with the native language will be lost in the process of modern day education. ‘When all my exams are over and the last school day is done’ writes a poet in this book, *‘I shall tear up my books and papers, Goodbye, my classmates, everyone! Back to my free country’* We trust that native lore will never suffer the fate of this author’s books after school, but rather it should strengthen and gracefully grow with the passage of time. (O’Conner 1965: n.p., my emphasis)

This short section reveals a great deal. Here, we see Reverend O’Connor devaluing the contributions of students throughout the booklet by acknowledging that the “volume is no masterpiece” (1965, np). We also see him dismiss what is perhaps one of the most overt critiques of colonial education by a student I found during my research. The student, seems to expressing joy at the prospect of returning to his “free country” and abandoning his “books and papers” (in O’Conner, 1965, n.p.). The student’s statements suggest that they are eagerly anticipating not only returning to their communities, but also abandoning their colonial education.

Statements such as Reverend O’Connor’s lead us to question the enthusiasm behind this more culturally sensitive residential school. They suggest that the presence of Aboriginal cultural elements in the IRS was a pragmatic move rather than an inclusive gesture. This shift attempts to reposition the European and Canadian governments as the saviours of Aboriginal history. It also reaffirms the “inability” of the Aboriginal population to care for themselves or their culture. Lastly, it positions Aboriginal versions of history as well as spiritual beliefs as myth and folklore rather than as history and religion. This, in turn, reaffirms Aboriginal

traditions and histories as ‘less’ valuable than their European counterparts and constructs them as fiction. By moving Aboriginal languages, history, and symbols into the overt curriculum residential school staff were continuing their attempts to legitimize the colonial project and continued efforts of assimilation.

The introduction of Aboriginal cultural elements in the residential school curriculum also served as a method of economic assimilation. Teaching art as a skill was seen as a way to facilitate the creation of an Aboriginal population that would prove economically useful to Canada. The importance of arts and crafts to the success of residential school graduates is clear in government documents. The Indian Affairs Branch (1960) listed art alongside home economics, industrial arts, music, auxiliary and physical education as a special subject in Indian education. All of the ‘special subjects’ listed here serve to make the Aboriginal population less dependent on the Canadian government and more useful to the Canadian economy; ultimately they serve to assist in the assimilation project.

Consumption of Aboriginal art by non-Aboriginal peoples occurred well before the residential school curriculum incorporated the cultural expression of its students. As early as 1903, a magazine called *The Papoose* published what it called the “Indian Corner,” a seven photograph exhibition representing a new home design trend (Hutchison, 2009, p. 11). Moreover, Hutchison (2009) explains the use of Aboriginal artistic creations in home design did not account for their geographical, temporal or political associations. Rather, the “Indian Corner” celebrated the use of Aboriginal artwork by specifically non-Aboriginal consumers (Hutchison, 2009). Thus, the idea of a sanitized and consumable version of the ‘Indian’ was present in the earliest years of the twentieth century. Central to the marketability of Aboriginal handicrafts is the ability to present recognizable and acceptable notions of Indigeniety (Phillips,

1998). This allows the buyer to envisage themselves as “specifically Indian” while at once requiring the artist to imagine themselves in “terms of the conventions of Indianness current among the consumer group” (Philips, 1998, p. 9). In the residential school context this imagining was directed and supervised by residential school staff. School staff played a significant role in the decisions about what would be included in student’s creative expressions and what would not. This is made clear in *My Heart is Glad* when Ringwood stated that she “clarified and shortened some selections” (1964, np). The editing of cultural elements extended to the art class as well. In Poplar Hill’s 1965-66 newspaper *New Horizons* a student describes his experience

Friday is an exciting day. In the afternoon we have art. Maybe it will be painting, decorating or making a new bulletin board. One time each one made a different kind of house – an igloo, long house, wigwam, house without walls, log cabin and pueblo. They are one people lived in long ago. (Grade three student, 1966, p.11).

From this statement it is clear that the editing of Aboriginal culture extends beyond content. It also actively positions the Aboriginal way of life as a relic rather than a continued lived experience.

The purpose of education is to bring people into alignment with social expectations. Therefore, economic and social programs created by the DIA would be based on the skills students were taught within the residential school. There are consistent references to the number of sales and the profit made from the sale of handicrafts in the Annual Reports of Indian Affairs from the 1930s onwards (Indian Affairs Branch, 1937). In the 1950s reports of profits become increasingly detailed and monitored across fiscal years. Accompanying this increased surveillance of the industry were supplementary programs such as the ‘Handicraft Program for Women at Seven Island’ in Quebec, 1950, which helped them procure the resources to make and

sell seal mitts, purses, and slippers (Indian Affairs Branch, 1950). Indian agents also promoted Homemaker's Clubs on reserves; these clubs were subsidized by the DIA and were meant to be a place where women could come together to knit, sew and discuss important issues and were, at times, acknowledged by the DIA for their contributions to the economy through the sales of their products (Indian Affairs Branch, 1955). Indian agents' attention to the handicraft industry makes it clear that the sale of Aboriginal art was an important aspect of economic assimilation. The increasing presence of Aboriginal cultural elements in residential school curriculum was aimed at ensuring graduates would join the effort and continue to sell the appropriate censored vision of the 'Indian' through their art. There is a connection, then, between the consumable and sanitized version of 'Indianness' presented in these newspapers and government efforts of economic assimilation in the twentieth century.

Encouraging IRS students to engage with their Indigeniety was tied closely to the perpetuation of the discourse of Aboriginal culture as relic. Created in a context of strict censorship the newspapers had to adhere to the guidelines of what was desirable to the non-Aboriginal gaze (de Leeuw, 2007). The display of this 'sanitized Indian' is tied to the promotion of First Nations folk art and handicrafts in the twentieth century. Folk art is defined as "the art, handicrafts, and decorative ornament produced by people who have had no formal art training but have an established tradition of styles and craftsmanship" (Clarke & Clarke, 2010, np). Throughout much of the twentieth century folk-art has been considered as opposite to 'high' art created by trained professionals. Harper (1974, p. 3) described folk art as the outcome of "a desire for personal expression" that is "intended largely for the enjoyment of the ordinary folk." The accessibility of folk art also materializes in an economic sense as it is most often more affordable than 'high art' contributing to its popularity. Folk art is often understood as an effort

of memorializing and sharing meaningful experiences of a particular community. In the IRS context, administrators tried to promote student's understanding of what could be appropriately communicated to Canadians at large as 'Indian.'

Figure twenty-six, for example, is the cover of *My Heart is Glad*. The image depicts an eagle with wings extended standing on a tree stump under the rays of the sun. The image is framed with deer and wolf tracks on the left and right sides respectively. In the middle of the image a fish floats in front of the tree stump. The image, drawn by a grade eight student is described on the first page of the newspaper. The description, however, is written by a teacher not the artist and so does not comment on the meaning of the image. Figure twenty-seven, a comic from *The Anglican Newsletter* shows a cowboy berating a downtrodden pony wearing a headdress. The caption, although brief, makes significant statements; "I don't care if your grandpappy [sic] was and Indian war pony – Keep that silly thing off your head." First, such a statement highlights the temporal distance between militarily engaged Aboriginal communities (and their horses) and contemporary IRS students. Second, it makes clear that the headdress is "silly", framing it as inappropriate attire, through the scolding of the 'cowboy.' A few pages later figure twenty-eight shows an image of a purse with an Aboriginal headdress embroidered on it. This image accompanies an excerpt about student produced handicrafts that are up for sale or that have been entered in the Calgary and Edmonton exhibitions. These images reinforce the argument that the use of Aboriginal symbols, cosmological beliefs and historical experiences in the IRS curriculum served the purpose of reinforcing Aboriginal culture as myth and historical relic. Furthermore, it represents colonial authorities attempts to communicate to IRS students what elements of their Indigeniety were deemed appropriate and inappropriate.



An interesting relationship arises when considering the Clarkson collection (1948) and the images in school newspapers collectively. The images in the Clarkson collection seemed to have been created in a more flexible environment. The variety in content suggests that students had some choice in what they would draw. The newspapers, however, were purposeful efforts by school officials to showcase student achievement and to highlight the skills that would enable economic success after graduation. As such, they were heavily monitored, edited and censored by teachers and administrators. The Clarkson collection displays a variety of themes and content while the newspapers are filled predominantly with images and stories of ‘Indians.’ This curious juxtaposition runs counter to the assumption that, left with a choice, students would ‘backslide’ entirely to their Indigenous roots. Rather, the Clarkson collection shows that students exercised

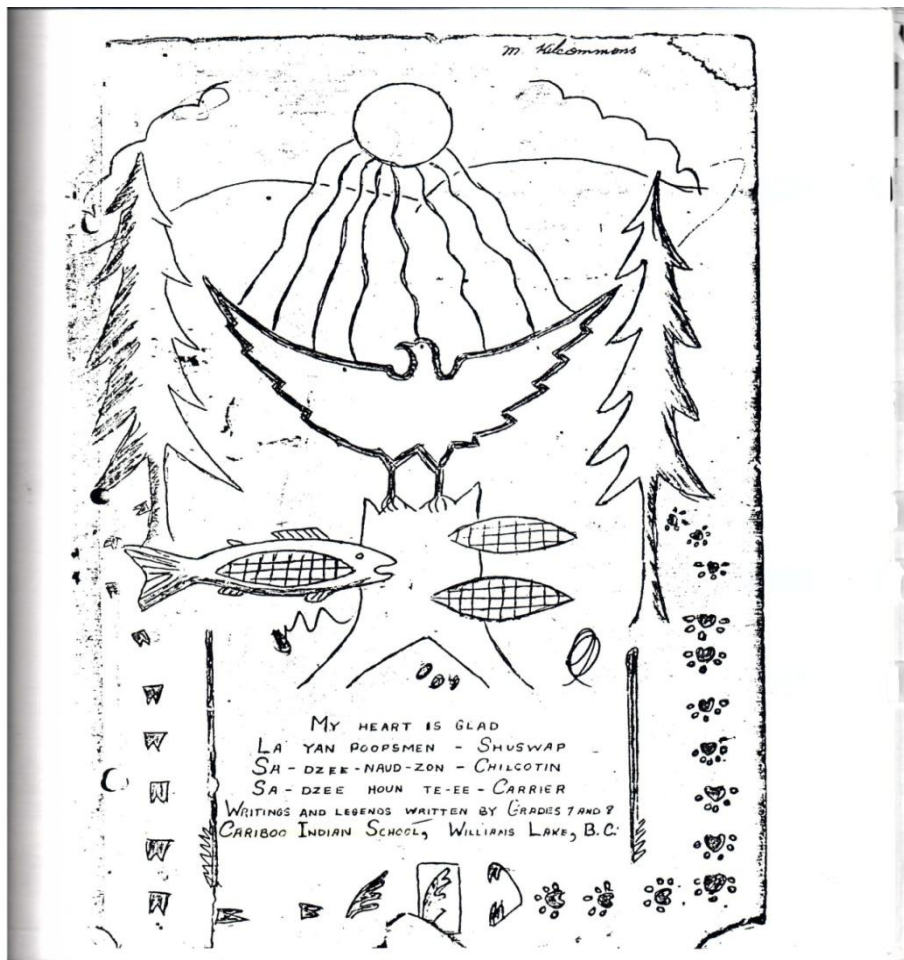


Figure Twenty-six; Cover of *My Heart is Glad* from Cariboo IRS, 1964, (source The Shingwauk Project)

discretion over what elements of colonial culture and their Aboriginal histories they would incorporate into their art. The newspapers, however, are overwhelmingly concerned with the portrayal of Indigeniety framed as successful colonial discipline. The images in the newspapers reflect what Margot Francis (2011, p. 147) has argued is a consistent portrayal of the Indian as primitivized being; “Whether Indians were portrayed as bloodthirsty or noble, they were always primitivized, and they have rarely been depicted in ways that portray their exercising a sense of legitimized agency for their own ends.”

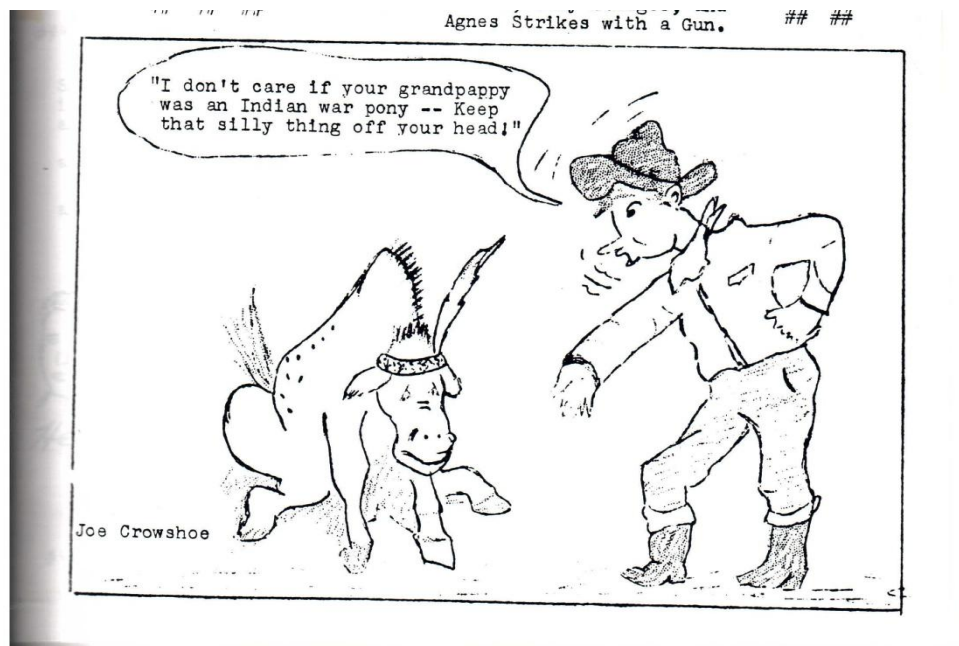


Figure Twenty-seven; Comic in *The Anglican Newsletter* from St. Cyprians IRS, 1958, (source The Shingwauk Project)

Almost all of the images I encountered depicted individuals in relation to the stereotypical understandings of their nationality and cultural traditions. This is particularly clear in the images of Aboriginals I have discussed here. The consistent presentation of the ‘sanitized Indian’ helped to not only create, but also reinforce, the notion that ‘real’ Indians appeared in costume. Similar constructions of such ‘national costumes’ are present in the images of Dutch, Eskimo, and Japanese children found in the social studies notebooks at The Shingwauk Project (see figure seven and eight). The promotion of such limited and stereotypical presentations is

inherently linked with the process of ‘othering’ that was central to IRS curriculum. This process presented alternative cultures as static and praised their historical roots rather than engaging their fluid and contemporary nature.

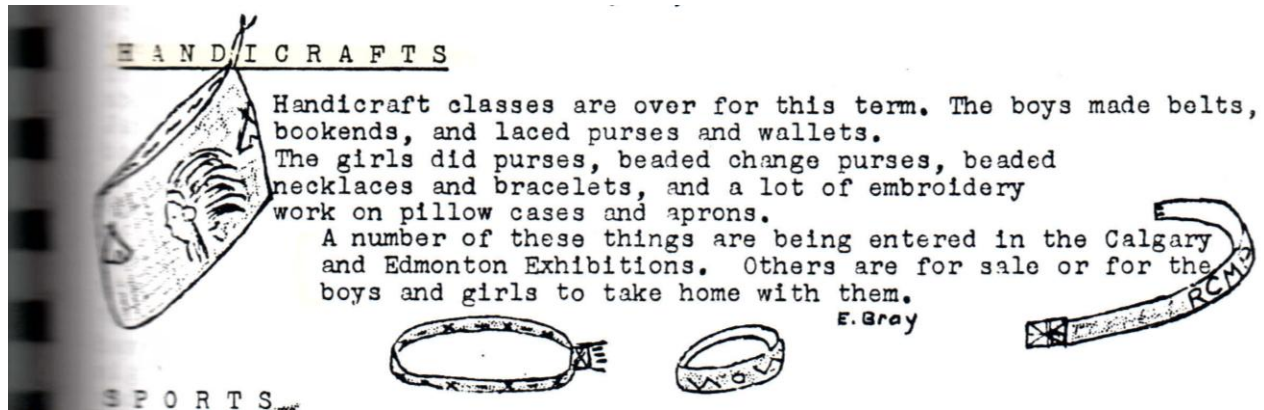


Figure Twenty-eight;  
Handicrafts in *The Anglican Newsletter* from St. Cyprians  
IRS, 1958, (source The  
Shingwauk Project)

In this chapter I have traced the presence of Aboriginal cultural elements, and its subsequent expression by students, in the residential school from the null curriculum to the overt. This discussion highlights how artistic expression has served many roles within the residential school. I have stressed the fluid nature of art in the educational context, and discussed how it has been appropriated by both students and IRS staff to serve their own purposes. Through this discussion it becomes clear that no one group can ever maintain complete control of the multiple networks of power in which they are embedded. Rather, students and staff were constantly engaged in relations of domination and resistance. In these relations, elements of colonial agendas and Aboriginal culture were ‘passed’ back and forth between student and teacher. This ultimately resulted in a hybridized product that would fully satisfy neither the colonial goal of assimilation nor Aboriginal attempts at unaltered cultural persistence.

The actions taken by school staff in the late twentieth century regarding art supports the argument that cultural persistence was mobilized as a method of resistance by students in the IRS. Until the mid-twentieth century there was intense pressure in residential schools to converse only in English, and to ignore Aboriginal culture altogether. At this point, however, documents such as school newspapers begin to present items such as the ‘Indian-English’ dictionary (My Heart is Glad, 1964). Furthermore, IRS teachers start making claims that students need to be told to remember their Aboriginal heritage. Despite the involvement of teachers in cultural expression, however, students continued to make clear their dissatisfaction with the IRS experience. The following poem featured in *The Thunderbird* from St. Michael’s IRS in Alert Bay, British Columbia, expresses this;

Although we get lonesome  
Watching ships sailing;  
Although we get tired  
Of hearing their wails,  
We often gaze yonder  
At mountains out yonder  
But forget in no time  
How lonely we’ve been;  
Forget how the boat sails  
And their wild sounding wails  
But still we oft gaze yonder  
At mountains out yonder.  
(The Thunderbird, 1949–1950, n.p.)

Such poems are the outcome of the patterns of domination and resistance in the IRS. They represent opportunities recognized and seized by students to express themselves in a system that sought to constrain them.

Lastly, I believe this discussion has shown that the use of art and creative expression as a method of resistance did not need to be part of a grand movement to be effective. Resistance

need not be an organized effort or obviously defiant in tone. Contemporary classroom management philosophy and experiences suggest that teachers react to both real and perceived opposition. As such, some students are able to mobilize a variety of images or narratives as ways to upset the disciplining nature of the classroom. This often materializes as small gestures, a statement out of turn but not obviously inappropriate, or a small graffiti image on a desk or assignment. Through such actions students are able to at once subvert the goals of the classroom as well as personalize a purposefully anonymous space.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusions**

The IRS system in Canada represents a dark period in our colonial history. The residential school's purpose was to eradicate the Aboriginal population through the transformation of its youth. Acts of cultural genocide, the assimilation policies of the British, and later Canadian, governments had devastating consequences. It is my hope that this thesis has shown how the Federal Government, as well as, several religious institutions facilitated a program that ultimately failed at its primary mandate, the education and complete assimilation of Aboriginal youth. Though the execution of these mandates varied from school to school, students at each location were under constant disciplinary pressure. Influence, however, was not a unidirectional process. Rather, interactions between students and staff were exchanges of information and behaviour. This thesis takes particular interest in how curriculum and space intersect in the context of colonial education. Through this investigation, I have discovered a complicated and everchanging relationship between curriculum, student product, discipline and resistance. I have argued that both the physical and symbolic spaces of the residential school were used in attempts to discipline students. These disciplinary spaces, however, also offered students opportunities to resist within the confines of the residential school. Thus, the residential school operated as a space where power was being utilized to support the efforts of both discipline and resistance. Finally, I have argued that upon the discovery of such subversive tactics school staffs attempted to reposition some elements of resistance to serve the assimilation process.

The comments made here are, in no way, meant to speak for, or in place of, the students of Indian Residential Schools. As such, I acknowledge that I have referenced materials that are predominantly negative. Some former students, however, have said that their education

education was valuable, but have noted that the school was not a pleasant experience overall. A former student at Shingwauk recalls “I’m glad we went away [after the death of her parents],” continuing “[i]t gave me a lot of confidence knowing it was a kind of home” (Van Every, 2004). She goes on to state that her education allowed her, and her siblings, to gain and retain successful employment in adulthood (Van Every, 2004). She reminds us, however, that she was isolated from her brother and younger sisters and regrets that they grew apart during their time there (Van Every, 2004). Furthermore, she admits that hunger was a constant problem stating “[w]e didn’t get enough to eat like we would have at home. But it was still food” (Van Every, 2004, np).

I must also recognize that some testimonials of former students have recorded a wholly positive outlook. In a letter to the Shingwauk Alumni Association (2000, np) Pearl’s sister, Dorothy Currie, states “Shingwauk saved my life. Shingwauk gave me the chance to live.” Dorothy (2000, np) goes on to remember fondly Reverend Charles H. Hives, who came to their home in Kanehsatake, a Mohawk Reserve outside of Oka in Quebec as “dedicated and a true Saint. He cared for each Indian child with all his heart and soul.” She goes on to make a call to her former peers to “come forward and to share the *positive* parts of their stories, or if only just to write on a piece of paper, ‘Thank you, I am grateful’...[as] we lived like ‘royalty’” (2000, np, original emphasis). It is clear from these accounts, along with the others that I have referenced throughout this thesis that each student had a unique experience of the residential school.

*i. Curriculum, Pedagogy, and the Reconstruction of Aboriginal Youth in the IRS*

I began my discussion of this dark historical period by posing four research questions. First, I questioned how the pedagogical approaches and curricular content of the residential school sought to transform Aboriginal students. While some students look back upon their time

at residential school fondly, the majority of student testimonials have shown that, for many, it was a difficult time. This was due, in part, to the priests and teachers relentless pressure to transform students into ‘civilized’ citizens. These pressures manifest in disciplinary techniques employed by school administration and staff. Discipline, the IRS curriculum, and the pedagogy of most staff sought to dispossess Aboriginal students of their Aboriginal heritage and to replace it with a set of Euro-Canadian ethics and social understandings. The success of such a transformation relied on the successful application of disciplinary techniques in the IRS. Discipline, in this context, relied heavily on the material spaces of the school. Classroom, dormitories and work spaces were arranged in a way that was intended to limit student’s use of them to their prescribed purposes. The spaces of residential schools, then, cannot be understood as neutral containers. Rather, they were carefully created spaces used to make material a particular set of discourses and reinforce the power disparity between staff and students. The organization of the school’s spaces is also pedagogical tool. For example, the material form of the school optimized staff ability to watch students. The constant gaze of colonial authorities promoted student compliance.

In chapter five I also discussed how the overt, hidden and null curriculums of the IRS played a role in the attempted reconstruction of Aboriginal students. Though some would have already been members of the Christian faith prior to their arrival, the overt curriculum focused considerable attention on the religious conversion and/or education of IRS students. This focus on religious conversion extended beyond church attendance and daily prayer. Priests and teachers reinforced ideas on Christian ideals of morality, hygiene, and comportment by imposing strict schedules on students. The half-day system of many residential schools also attempted to ensure that residential school graduates would be ‘useful’ citizens engaged in an appropriate



trade. Perhaps the most insidious element of the overt curriculum was its focus on creating English speaking subjects. Administrators believed that the students who spoke English upon graduation would have greater success. However, the promotion of English over all traditional Aboriginal languages had a devastating effect on many communities (Commanda & Clarke, 2010; Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999).

I also explored how the hidden and null curriculums played an important role in the transformative aims of the residential school. The goal of the hidden curriculum was to fundamentally alter the way Aboriginal students would interact with both space and time upon their graduation. Emphasis on farming skills for boys and household duties for girls not only promoted Euro-Canadian ideas about gender roles, but also reinforced the superiority of a sedentary lifestyle. Through the process of active nullification, residential school staff sought to position the content not taught in schools as inferior. This resulted in a set of negative discourses around Aboriginal traditional practices, spiritual beliefs and languages being imposed upon IRS students. The exclusion of the oral histories of Aboriginal communities also sought to replace student's ontological and cosmographical understandings with those attached to Euro-Canadian and Christian world views.

## *ii. Curriculum, Product, and Resistance in the IRS*

My second research question was concerned with the relationship between curriculum and student product within the IRS. It became obvious that this relationship is as complicated as the interactions between student and staff. In chapter five I discussed how the disciplinary tactics of colonial education were intricately woven across the overt, hidden, and null curriculums. These curriculums, when considered together, show that the IRS was intent on the

eradication of student's ontological understandings and the legitimization of colonial efforts.

There is, then, an intimate link between the IRS curriculum and student products. Students were not only charged with the responsibility of producing the desired academic outcomes, but teachers also viewed them as products of colonial education themselves. The success or failure of colonial education could be read on the bodies and through the behaviours of current and graduated students.

The complicated connection between curriculum and student product is also intricately related to instances of student resistance within the residential school context and thus my third research question; how did students creatively resist the goals of colonial education? Teachers and administrators never achieved totalizing discipline within the residential school context. I discussed in chapter six how students frequently, and creatively, found a multitude of ways to resist their colonial education. I found that students were sometimes able to manipulate the constraints of their physical circumstances to achieve their own ends. While there seems to be little evidence of resistance to many elements of the overt curriculum, the detailed rules for student conduct do suggest that there were times when students were 'acting out' in class. I was also struck by the notion of resistance through compliance. In this case, I discussed a student who was academically successful both in the residential school and beyond, but who then used his skills to mobilize a campaign against laws limiting the practice of Aboriginal traditions. It also became clear that students were able to negotiate their circumstances to undermine the rules. This led to successful communications between members of the opposite sex and students achieving revenge against staff members they had understood to have wronged them. In chapter seven I contemplated how students used efforts of cultural persistence to circumvent the efforts of assimilation made by school staff. This can be seen in the continued use of Aboriginal

languages, for example. But it can also be seen in students' memories; that their ontological understandings could not be easily erased and replaced with those conforming to the colonial agenda. The autoethnographic nature of student's creative works in classroom work and school newspapers made this clear as student recount stories told to them by their parents and grandparents as well as those fuelled by their own experiences.

### *iii. Curriculum and Staff Response in the IRS*

My final research question inquired as to how school staff reacted to instances of student resistance in the IRS setting. I first addressed this question in chapter five. There I discussed how instances of resistance discovered by school staff were often met with harsh punishments. For example, students caught running away from the school, talking to members of the opposite sex, or who 'talked back' to school staff were often humiliated in front of their peers. In some instances this humiliation meant the shaving of one's head while in others it meant corporeal punishment. In both cases these punishments occurred within the view of other students and were purposefully meant to shame the student into future compliance.

In chapter seven, I considered how school staff reacted to the continued subversion of colonial agendas by students in more subtle ways, including efforts of resistance carried out through cultural persistence by students. Specifically, I considered the role of student produced visual art. When considering the role of student artwork and cultural products in the residential school it became obvious that efforts to eradicate student's ontological understandings and cultural practices were unsuccessful. I argued colonial educators recognized that, despite their ethereal nature, efforts to subvert assimilation through instances of cultural persistence were recognized by colonial educators. This resulted in the repositioning of Aboriginal heritage in the

IRS curriculum. By bringing Aboriginal cultural elements into the overt curriculum educators hoped to control their use. IRS staff sought to describe themselves as saviours and authorities of Aboriginal cosmological beliefs, oral histories and languages. This repositioning, however, was part of the overall assimilation project. Colonial educators defined Aboriginal cultural traditions as part of a dying culture attempting to remove their powerful role in cultural reproduction and promoting the assimilation of students.

Despite the fact that I was able to collect a wealth of textual resources, including government documents and testimonials, I was only able to work with a limited collection of student created resources. While I was initially hoping to find a significant number of resources that showed the successful resistance of students within a system colonial education this was not the case. Rather, the small sample of artwork I was able to look at combined with the newsletters and testimonials to which I had access showed that understanding student art produces in the context of residential schools assimilationist project is a tricky project. In particular, defining what constitutes ‘resistance’ in student art production is not at all obvious or clear. Students who did engage in behaviour that subverted the goals of the IRS system were taking real emotional, physical, and social risks. The artwork does show that students did negotiate their residential school experiences with varied levels of cultural adaptations. Though the small number of student produced works of art and literature does connect with the limitations of archival research, it is possible that other student produced works of art or literature existed but were discarded.

Whether attempting to assimilate Aboriginal students into colonial culture or to promote students to engage with the approved components of their Indigeniety, the complete subjugation of students was never achieved. Rather, some students were able to negotiate their feelings and

experiences of IRS life by actively choosing which elements of their colonial culture they would absorb. What results, then, is never the total repression of students, but a pattern of exchange and expression. In these exchanges children meet attempts at domination with carefully articulated hybridized identities that never quite aligned with colonial goals.

This thesis explores one aspect of nineteenth and twentieth century colonial policy. Going forward, there is a valuable opportunity for research into how the contemporary spaces of education contribute to an ongoing colonization and ignorance of Aboriginal culture. As both an educator and citizen I am bothered by Godlewska, Moore and Bednasek's (2010) assertions that the cultivated "ignorance of Aboriginal realities" remains a pervasive reality in Canadian society. Our education system reinforces this ignorance across generations. This system continues to promote a curriculum, in Ontario specifically, that glosses over the violent history of colonialism in Canada. Furthermore, this curriculum continues to largely ignore Aboriginal culture and constructs Indigenous peoples as a population without a history previous to European contact. This situation presents two important areas for prospective research. Firstly, there is a lack of educational attention paid to Aboriginal histories and experiences for non-Aboriginal students as well as to the disturbing realities associated with the "founding" of this country. But also, research is needed to address how the physical and symbolic spaces of contemporary education continues to negatively impact the experience of Aboriginal students.

Thus, my discussion of the IRS system in Canada ends as it began, with the contemplation of some difficult issues. It is clear that the disciplinary tactics of the IRS resulted in students suffering physical and symbolic violence. Though many would like to deny our colonial heritage, I believe we must continue to improve the efforts made towards understanding

the damage done, as well as, assisting in whatever ways possible in the reconciliation and healing process.

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## **Appendix One: Interview Questions**

- 1) Could you speak to the role of visual art/symbolism /imagery in cultural reproduction (both historically and contemporarily) for the Aboriginal communities for which you have knowledge?
- 2) a. Can you discuss some of the important icons/symbols used in art within the Aboriginal communities that you have knowledge about?  
b. Can you discuss why these are important? What they represent?
- 3) a. Can you talk about the role art and cultural products (i.e. clothing, pottery, etc) have played historically in the Aboriginal communities of which you are aware?  
b. Can you talk about the role art and cultural products (i.e. clothing, pottery, etc) play in contemporary Aboriginal communities of which you are aware?
- 4) Are you aware of the act of creating or producing art or other cultural products as being part of any cultural rituals or ceremonies?
- 5) Does or did art have a role in the education of Aboriginal youth in the communities you are aware of?
- 6) Do you see any possibility for art/cultural products to be used as a tool or instrument of cultural persistence or resistance to colonial discourses in society historically?
- 7) Do you see any possibility for art/cultural products to be used as a tool or instrument of cultural persistence or resistance to colonial discourses in society contemporarily?
- 8) Can you speak about your views on the tensions present between the representations of Aboriginal(s) in public spaces (i.e. museums, archival collections, etc) and Aboriginal communities?
- 9) Any other comments/insights you would like to share?

## Appendix Two: Anglican Recruitment Brochure (Date Unknown)

### 36,000 ANGLICAN INDIANS LOOK TO THE CHURCH FOR LEADERSHIP

Our Church, concerned for the Indian's welfare, has undertaken, in co-operation with the Government, to provide education for Indian children. Good food and kindly care build healthy bodies; Christian teaching and character-forming activities develop worthy Canadian citizens.

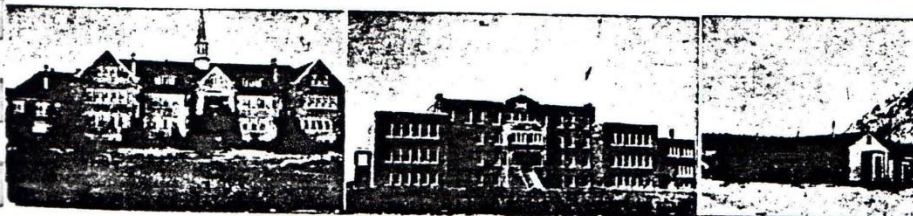
There are fourteen Indian Residential Schools in operation with a total of 1,700 pupils. Efficient operation calls for 250 staff members. Only 220 now employed. Thirty more needed immediately:—

*Teachers, Boys' and Girls' Supervisors, Cooks, Laundresses,  
Sewing Supervisor, Handicraft Teachers, Farmers, Engineers,  
Sport Supervisors, Manual Training Instructors,  
General Assistants.*

St. Paul's, Blood, Cardston, Alta.

Old Sun, Blackfoot, Gleichen, Alta.

Chooutle School, Carc





*Can you.....*

*Sew,*

*Cook,*

*Teach,*

*Garden,*

*Supervise,*

*Work with Others,*

*Launder Clothes or*

*Care for Machinery*

?

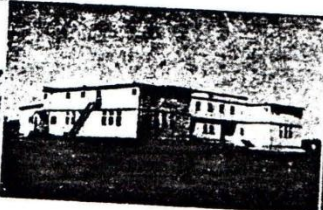
IF SO,  
YOU ARE NEEDED IN YOUR  
CHURCH'S  
INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

(See page 5)

oss, Yukon



All Saints', Aklavik, N.W.T.



St. Michael's, Alert Bay, B.C.



Shingwa



OUR OBJECTIVE  
To Change the Outlook of the Native Child

FROM



TO

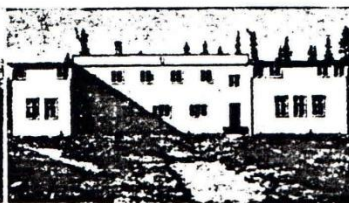


IN  
ATTAINING  
OUR OBJECTIVE WE  
USE THE SERVICES OF  
CHRISTIAN WORKERS. CAN  
YOU NOT SPARE ONE . . . TWO . . . OR A FEW YEARS OF  
YOUR LIFE FOR THIS GREAT UNDERTAKING, OR, PERHAPS  
YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT TAKE UP  
THE CHALLENGE?

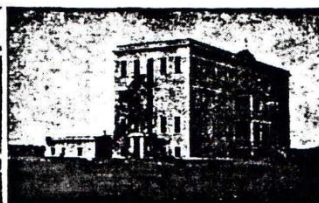
St. Mary's, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.



St. Philip's, Fort George, Que.



St. Cyprian's, Peigan, Brocket, Alta.

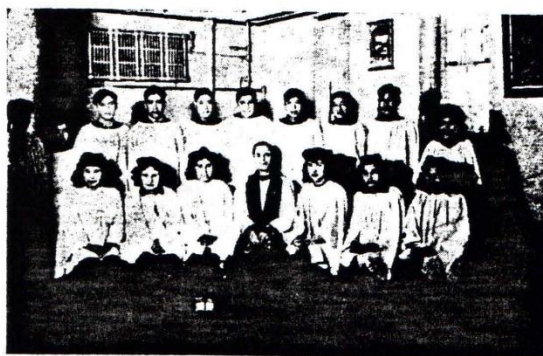




Sioux Lookout Black Hawks, all Indian Hockey Team, noted for clean sportsmanship and good manners, given week-end in Ottawa by Government as a reward for outstanding play. Development of team-play important result of sports programme in Schools.

National Film Board, Ottawa

Developing the spiritual life of the Indian is an important part of school life, and choir work is one means of training in worship. Picture — Old Sun School Choir, Rev. E. S. W. Cole, Principal.



Prince Albert Indian School not shown

St. John's, Wabasca, Alta.



CUT OUT AND MAIL . . .

The Superintendent,  
Indian School Administration,  
102 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ont.

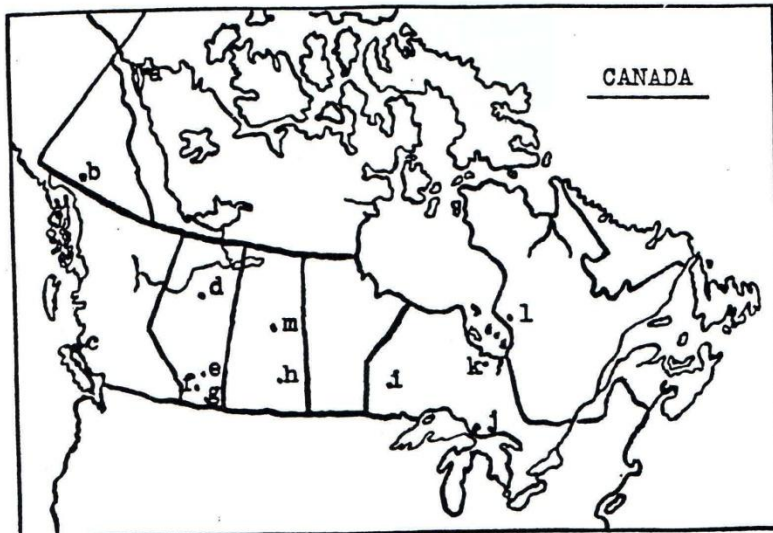
Please forward.....copies of additional  
literature about Indian Residential Schools and  
their staff needs, to the following address:

.....

.....

.....





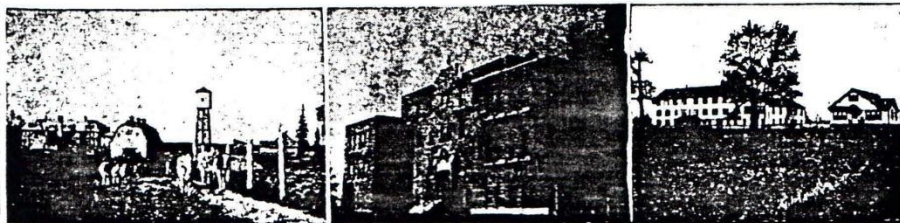
#### KEY TO SCHOOLS

School	Diocese	Community	Pupils
a All Saints'	Arctic	Aklavik	100
b Chooutla	Yukon	Carcross	60
c St. Michael's	Columbia	Alert Bay	200
d St. John's	Athabasca	Wabasca	60
e Old Sun	Calgary	Gleichen	130
f St. Cyprian's	Calgary	Brocket	60
g St. Paul's	Calgary	Cardston	160
h Gordon's	Qu'Appelle	Punnichy	140
i Sioux Lookout	Keewatin	Sioux Lookout	150
j Shingwauk	Algoma	Sault Ste. Marie	150
k Bishop Horden	Moosonee	Moose Factory	100
l St. Philip's	Arctic	Fort George	60
m Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	Prince Albert	450

Sioux Lookout, Sioux Lookout, Ont.

Gordon's, Punnichy, Sask.

Bishop Horden Mem., Moose Factory



**Appendix Three: Content Analysis of the Ann Clarkson Collection (The Shingwauk Project Archives)**

<b>General Themes</b>		<b>Number of Images</b>
<b>Animals</b>		<b>24</b>
	Horses	5
	Birds	5
	Wolves	4
	Cougars	2
	Deer	2
	Bear Family	1
	Polar Bear	1
	Raccoon Family	1
	Dog	1
	Tiger	1
	Squirrel	1
<b>Sports</b>		<b>9</b>
	Hockey	6
	Baseball	2
	Boxing	1
<b>Vehicles</b>		<b>9</b>
	Motorbike	3
	Cargo boat	2
	Motorboat	1
	Rocket	1
	Sail boat	1
	Car	1
<b>Nature</b>		<b>5</b>
	View from Shingwauk IRS	2
	Landscape	1
	Flowers	1
	Mexico	1
<b>“Indians”</b>		<b>3</b>
	In traditional dress	3
<b>Structures</b>		<b>2</b>
	Shingwauk IRS	1
	Castle	1
<b>Superheroes</b>		<b>2</b>
	He-man	1
	Tarzan	1